Please report common barberry bush locations to the Stevens County Noxious Weed Control Board (509-684-7590) or to Diana Roberts, WSU Spokane County Extension (509-477-2167).

Flyer created by Diana Roberts, PhD, Agronomist, Washington State University Extension
Barberry is essential in spreading the rust-pathogen. The stem rust fungus has 3 different life stages: 1.) It survives over winter on infected wheat or barley stubble. 2.) In the spring it moves on to common barberry — its alternate host — where it produces (via a sexual process) new races or biotypes. 3.) The rust fungus then moves on to susceptible wheat or barley plants where it reproduces asexually every 10 to 14 days. It can spread great distances by the end of the season, especially if there is rain in August.

None of the wheat and barley varieties grown currently in Washington are resistant to the stem rust races found in 2007 and 2008. Stem rust infection occurs first in May or June, but it is often not seen until black clouds of spores occur at harvest. Growers should monitor grain crops regularly from mid-June onward (especially after late-season rain) and contact WSU Extension with fungicide application questions.

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