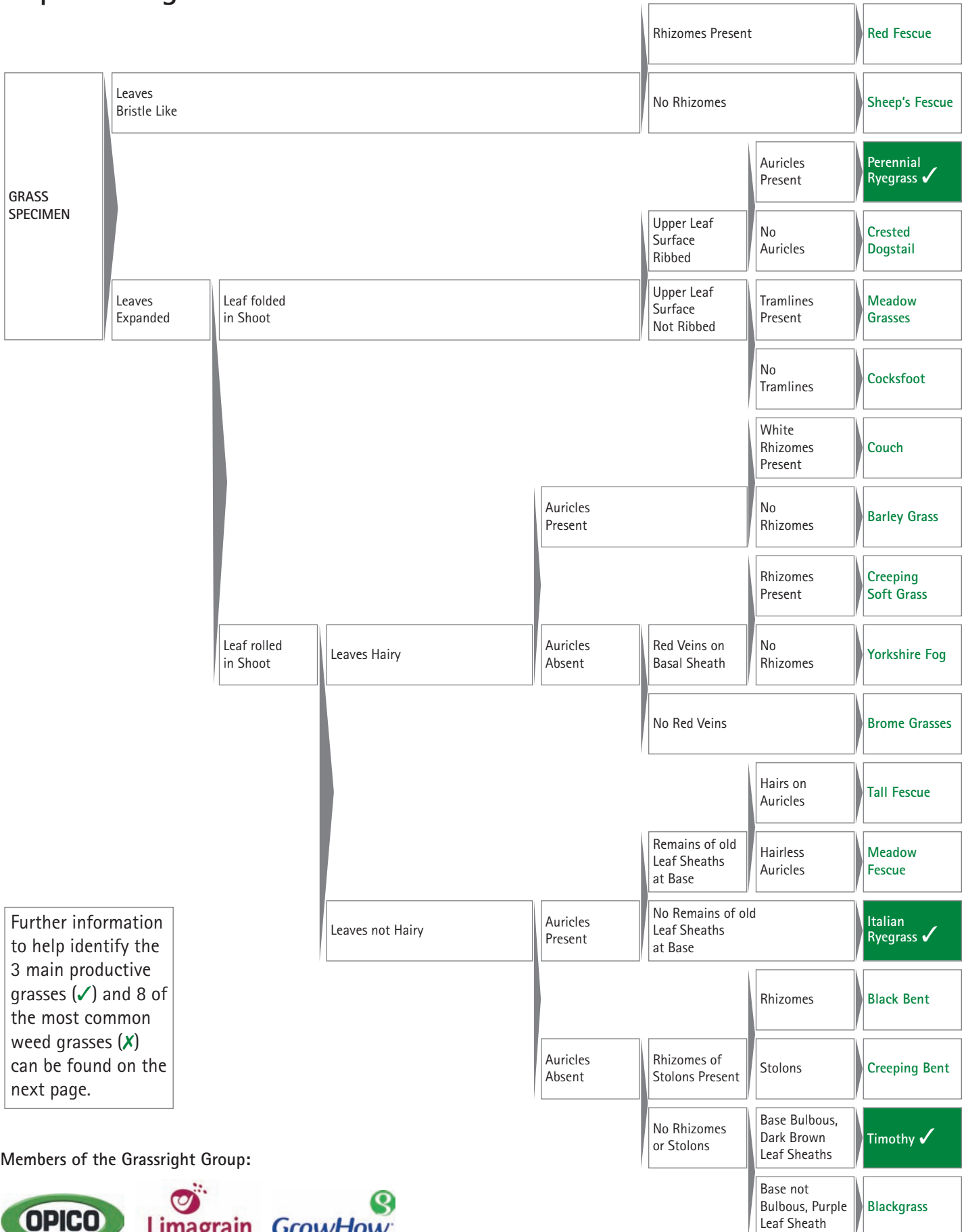


Grasses












A practical guide to identification



Further information to help identify the 3 main productive grasses (✓) and 8 of the most common weed grasses (X) can be found on the next page.

Members of the Grassright Group:



Name	Ligule	Auricles	Leaf Blade	Leaf Sheath	Seedling	Description
Perennial Ryegrass <i>Lolium perenne</i> ✓	 Short, up to 1mm. Blunt.	Small.	Dark green and hairless. Leaf blades folded in the shoot. US dull and distinctly ribbed. LS smooth and very glossy.	Split or entire. Smooth and often pink or purple at base when young. Tillers flattened.	Backs of leaves very shiny.	 Large, dark green tufted perennial. Superficially similar to <i>A. repens</i> but no rhizome and LS of leaf very glossy.
Italian Ryegrass <i>Lolium multiflorum</i> ✓	Small, 2mm. Blunt.	Narrow, spreading, prominent when old.	Dark green, hairless and finely pointed. US ribbed and dull. LS smooth, glossy and keeled. Rolled in bud.	Entire or split. Rounded, usually smooth. Sheath base often pink or reddish.	Glossy underside and leaves rolled.	Leafy tufted annual or biennial. Distinguished from <i>L. perenne</i> by leaves rolled in the shoot and large auricles.
Timothy <i>Phleum pratense</i> ✓	 Long, up to 6mm. Blunt, rounded and white.	Absent.	Light green, broad, rough on both surfaces and leaf margins. Slightly keeled. Rolled in shoot.	Split, rounded, and smooth. Sheath bases dark brown with age and bulbous at base.	1st leaf erect, twisted and sharply pointed.	 Tall tufted, rather coarse perennial. Very variable in size, shape and growth habit. Found mainly on moist, heavy soils.
Blackgrass <i>Alopecurus myosuroides</i> ✗	Medium, 2.5mm. Blunt, finely serrated.	Absent.	Bluish-green, short, flat and hairless. US rough. LS rough or smooth. Well defined keel. Rolled in bud.	Green or purplish. Split, smooth and round. Slender with few joints. Base not bulbous but often purple.	1st blade fine, erect and twisted. Tip round and blunt.	Tall, erect, tufted or solitary annual.
Annual Meadow Grass <i>Poa annua</i> ✗	Medium 2-5mm. Roundly pointed and serrated.	Absent.	Light green with boat-shaped tip. Blade often crinkled or puckered, hairless and limp. Slightly keeled. "Tramlines". Folded in shoot.	Split or entire, smooth keeled and compressed.	1st leaf erect with broad upper part tapering abruptly to a blunt point.	 Small, loosely tufted annual or short-lived perennial. Very variable. Can germinate and set seed throughout the year.
Rough Stalked Meadow Grass <i>Poa trivialis</i> ✗	Long 4-10mm. Pointed and membranous.	Absent.	Green with boat-shaped tip. Minutely rough and abruptly pointed. LS glossy and keeled. "Tramlines". Folded at first, opening flat later.	Entire, usually rough and keeled. Compressed.	Similar to <i>P. annua</i> but LS of leaf usually glossy.	Loosely tufted perennial, spreading by stolons. Larger than <i>P. annua</i> . May have purplish tinge.
Cocksfoot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> ✗ (✓ in dry areas)	 Long, up to 12mm. Membranous.	Absent.	Dull green or greyish-green. Rough, broad and sharply pointed. Folded in flattened shoot, opening later. Strongly keeled.	Entire, sharply keeled front and back giving very flattened appearance. Very rough to touch.	Tip of 1st leaf bends over and narrows to blunt point.	 Largely densely tufted perennial of coarse appearance. Drought tolerant. Numerous strains of varying growth habits.
Couch Grass <i>Agropyron repens</i> ✗	Very short, 1mm. Blunt.	Short and pointed.	Dull green. Long, flat and tapering to a sharp point. Widest in the middle. US rough and sparsely hairy. LS smooth or rough.	Split, rounded and without distinct keel. Lower sheaths may be hairy.	Aerial shoots from rhizomes are dark green, tapering to sharp point.	Perennial spreading by long stout, sharply pointed white rhizomes. Degree of hairiness very variable.
Yorkshire Fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> ✗	 Medium, 1-4mm blunt and hairy.	Absent.	Pale grayish-green, narrowing to fine point. Very hairy and velvety to touch.	Split rounded with numerous reflexed hairs. Veins of basal sheaths pinkish/red.		 Tufted very hairy perennial. Hairs longer than <i>H. mollis</i> . Found mainly in wetter upland areas.
Sterile Brome <i>Bromus sterilis</i> ✗	Medium, 4mm. Pointed, deeply serrated.	Absent.	Green with purplish tinge. Flat, flaccid and finely pointed. Surfaces rough with short hairs. Rolled in bud.	Entire, tubular but soon splitting. Short soft hairs though upper sheaths may be hairless.	Similar to <i>B. mollis</i> but seedling coleoptile coloured.	Tall tufted annual or biennial.
Creeping Bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> ✗	 Long, up to 5mm, roundly, pointed tip.	Absent.	Green, greyish or bluish tinge. Hairless. Rolled when young, flat later. Minutely rough.	Split, rounded, smooth and sometimes reddish.	1st leaf very fine and narrow, tapering to fine point.	 Tufted perennial spreading by surface rooting stolons. Distinguished from <i>P. trivialis</i> by absence of "tramlines" and <i>A. repens</i> by long ligule and finer leaves.

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS: Leaf Blade – The free part of the grass leaf. Leaf Sheath – The part of the grass leaf which grasps the stem. Rhizome – A stem running horizontally just below the soil surface. Stolon – A stem running horizontally on the soil surface. Auricles – Small claw or ear-like outgrowths at the junction of leaf sheath and blade. Ligule – Membranous extension at the junction of the leaf sheath and blade. Tramlines – Two parallel lines, one either side of the mid-rib. Readily seen if held up to the light. Characteristic of *Poa* spp. Entire – Leaf sheath tubular. Reflexed – Pointed backwards or downwards. Split – Leaf sheath split. US – Upper surface of leaf. LS – Lower surface of leaf.