

# Grass Identification



**Deryn Davidson – CSU Extension Boulder County**

**Amy Lentz – CSU Extension Weld County**

**Lisa Mason – CSU Extension Arapahoe County**

**Alison O'Connor – CSU Extension Larimer County**

**Tony Koski – CSU Extension Campus**

Tony.Koski@colostate.edu  
970-222-1450 cell/text (text me grass ID pics!)  
Twitter: @CSUturf  
csuhort.blogspot.com



1

## Why Identify Grasses?

### Management Requirements

- water, fertilizer, mowing heights

### Pest Management

- pest identification
- use pesticides according to label

### Weed Control

- proper control products, rates, timing



2

## Goosegrass



3



4

## Postemergence Annual Grass Control

### Crabgrass



quinclorac  
fenoxaprop (Acclaim Extra)  
mesotrione (Tenacity)  
topramezone (Pylex)

### Goosegrass



fenoxaprop (Acclaim Extra)  
mesotrione (Tenacity)  
topramezone (Pylex)

quinclorac NO!

5

## Postemergence Annual Grass Control

### Crabgrass



quinclorac  
fenoxaprop (Acclaim Extra)  
mesotrione (Tenacity)  
topramezone (Pylex)

### Goosegrass



fenoxaprop (Acclaim Extra)  
mesotrione (Tenacity)  
topramezone (Pylex)

quinclorac NO!

6



## Incorrect ID of a pest – and then addressing the problem improperly (perhaps illegally?)

- Incorrect identification prevents you from using correct cultural and chemical practices
- Incorrect ID can lead to ineffective use of pesticides
- Incorrect ID can cost you money, customers, and credibility



What is this weed?

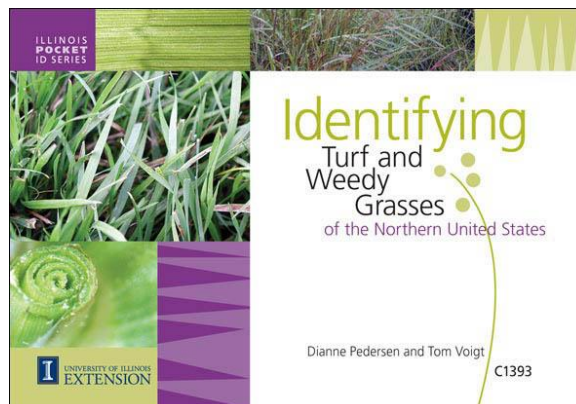
7

## University of Illinois "Identifying Turf and Weedy Grasses of the Northern United States"

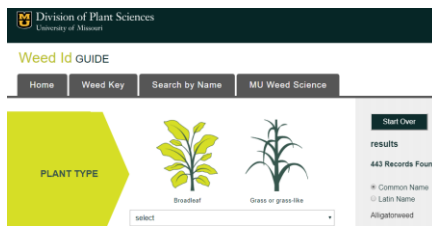
<https://pubsplus.illinois.edu/>

In search box type "turf ID"

Cost \$11.75, including postage



8



## University of Missouri

<https://weedid.missouri.edu/weedKey.cfm>

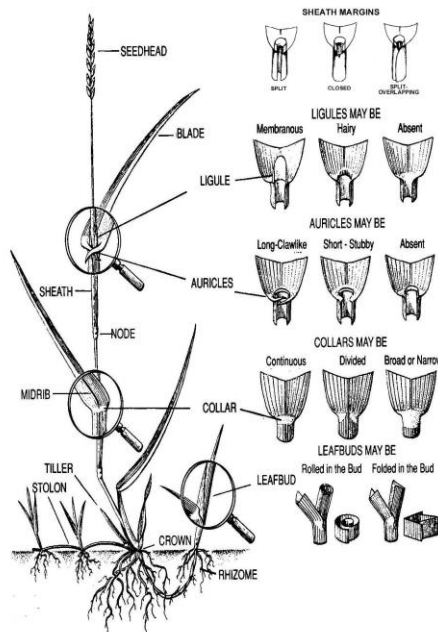
FREE phone apps for both iPhone and Android systems

Ag-oriented, but still addresses lawn and garden weeds

Over 440 weeds in database

Good botanical descriptions for using the key

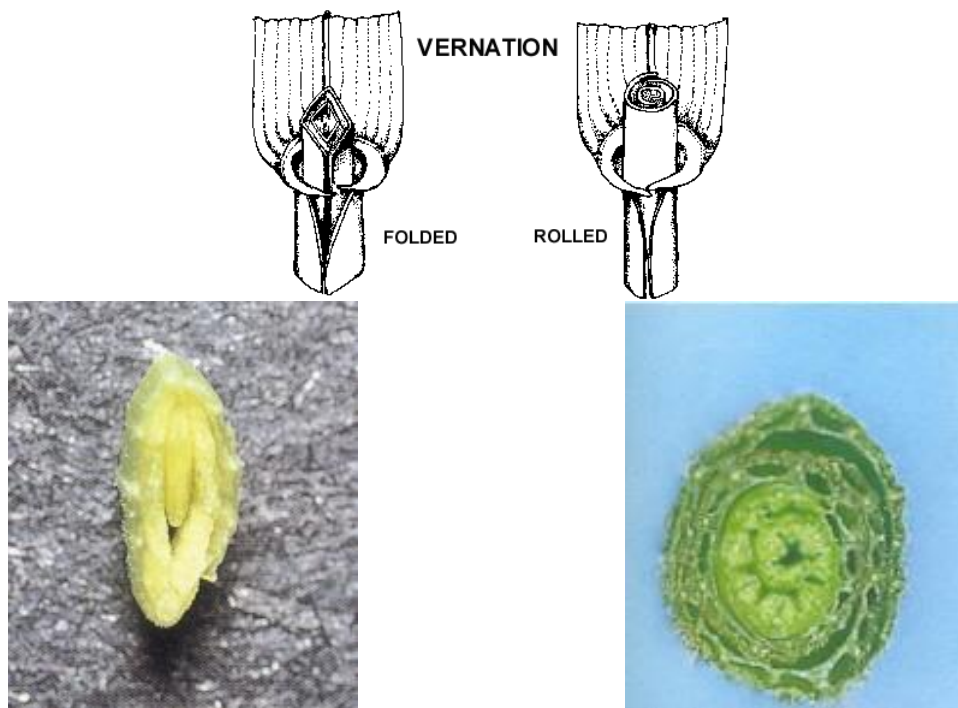
9



### Grass ID Tips:

- Look at vegetative shoots (no flowers/seedheads) whenever possible
- Always begin ID using the youngest leaf (the one coming out the top of the shoot)
- Look at several leaves
- Look for rhizomes and/or stolons
- Be patient

10



11

## Two Types of Vernation



Folded newspaper



Cinnamon roll

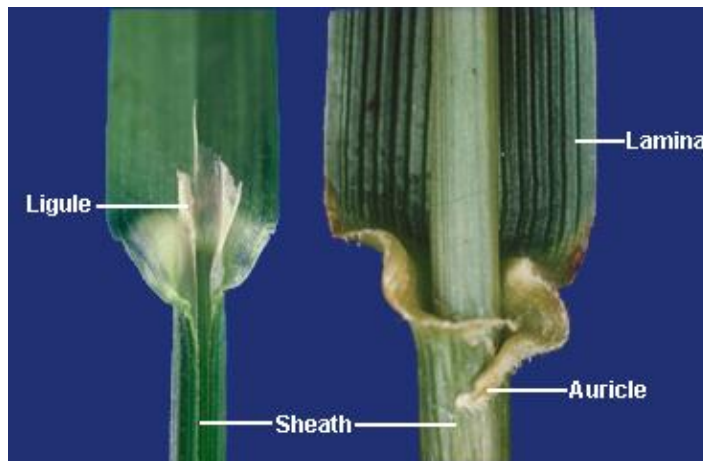
12

### **Rolled vernation**

Leaf is curling under itself  
in the shoot



13



### **Ligules and Auricles**

Where the sheath meets the blade of the grass

14

## Ligules and Auricles

Ligule: Shirt collar that sticks up in back



15

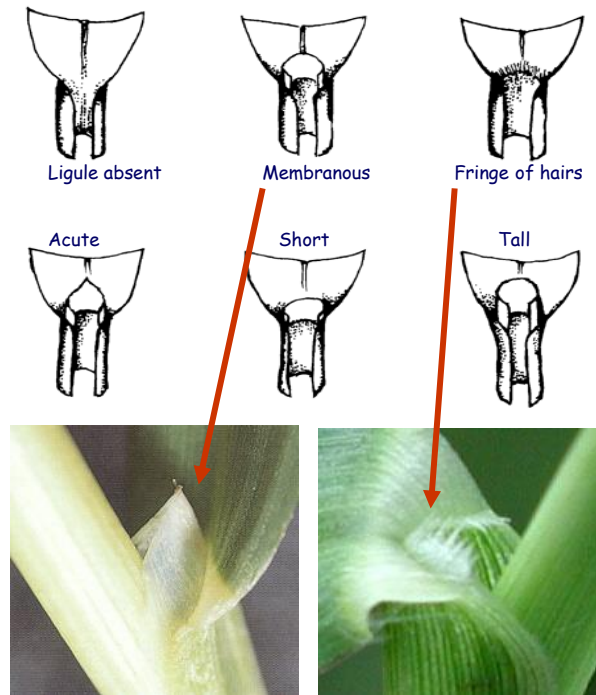
## Ligules and Auricles

Auricle: Front points of shirt collar



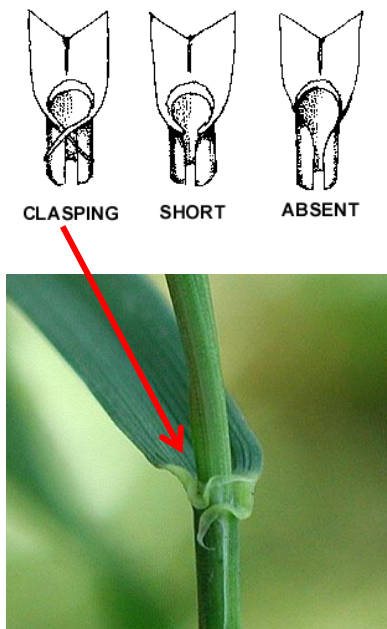
16



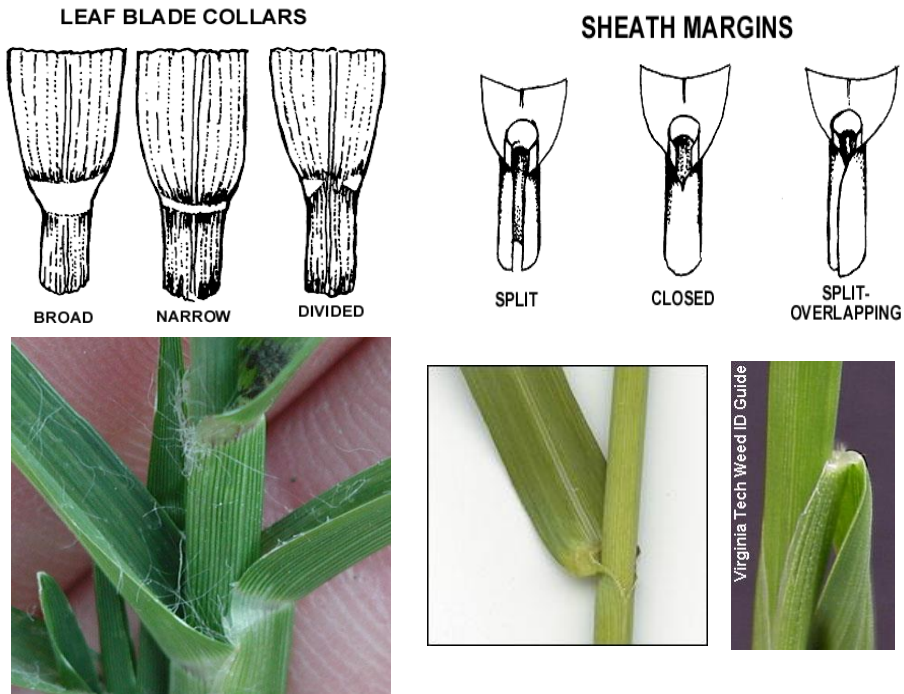


17

### AURICLE CONFIGURATION



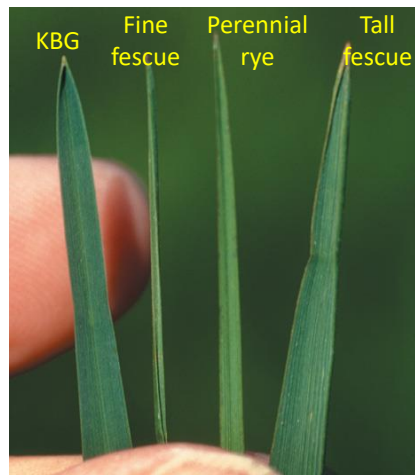
18



19

## Leaf Blade Width

- Not precise
  - Density of turf
  - Mowing height
  - Turf cultivar
  - Fertility and irrigation effects



20

# Boat-Shaped Leaf Tip

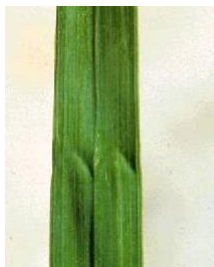
- Most apparent on bluegrasses
- Has to be an unmowed leaf tip
- Other grasses (besides bluegrasses) will sometimes have a boat-shaped leaf tip



21

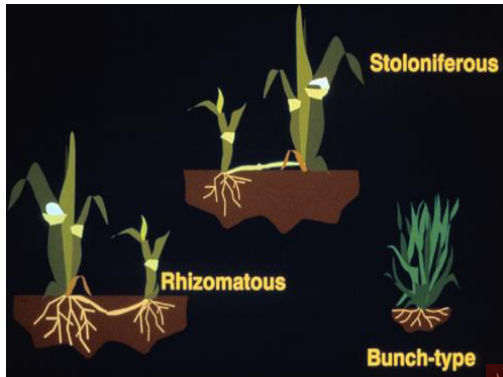
## What is a “watermark”?

A small “wrinkle” on the leaf blade



Don't focus on the watermark!  
They are unreliable and often variable

22

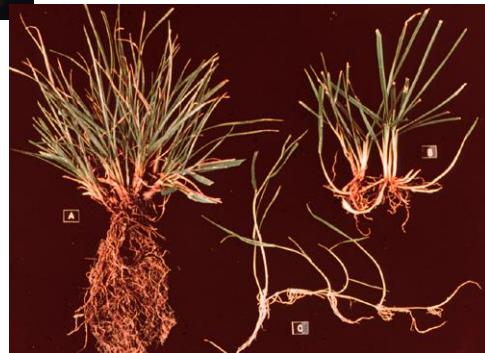


### Stoloniferous and rhizomatous grasses “creep”

- Bluegrass
- Quackgrass
- Bermudagrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Rough bluegrass (*Poa triv*)

### Bunch grasses form clumps

- Perennial ryegrass
- Tall fescue
- Blue grama



23

## Other Characteristics Used for Grass ID

- Annual or perennial?
- Warm-season vs. cool-season species?
- Favored growing conditions
  - Sun or shade?
  - Wet or dry?
  - Trafficked or compacted?
- Leaf color, texture
- Patches or bunch-type growth?



24




## Turfgrass Weed Control for Professionals

Google search "Purdue Turf weed control"

Wait for 2020 version...probably available in December 2019

**PURDUE**  
EXTENSION

Home Media ▼ FAQ Contact Us My Account Shopping Cart ▼



**Turfgrass Weed Control for Professionals**  
2019 edition - PDF

**PRICE**  
\$12.00/ Each

1 [Add to Cart](#)

Product code: TURF-100-W

**DESCRIPTION**

This guide provides weed identification and control information that turfgrass professionals can use to develop effective weed control programs for golf courses, athletic fields, sod farms, lawns, and other turfgrass systems. The recommendations apply to the majority of the United States, with input from experts in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Formerly Purdue Extension publication AY-336.

**Format:** PDF.

**Language:** English. Pages: 132.