



**S**



**G<sub>1</sub>**



**G<sub>2</sub>**



**L**



**P**

**X4.8**



# *POA ANNUA*

## Annual Poa or Winter Grass

A tufted annual, 5–30 cm high, often forming a mat. *Culms* erect, spreading or prostrate, slender, somewhat flattened, unbranched or branched towards the base, smooth. *Nodes* hairless. *Leaves* bright green, mostly basal. *Leaf sheaths* flattened and keeled, smooth, hairless, becoming loose. *Ligule* membranous, 2–5 mm long. *Leaf blades* up to 14 cm long, linear, smooth, hairless, keeled and terminating in a blunt, boat-shaped tip.

*Inflorescence* an open panicle, more or less pyramidal in shape, up to 12 cm long, the branches paired or solitary, spreading at maturity. *Spikelets* (S) flattened, 3–10 mm long, crowded towards the ends of the branches, disarticulating above the persistent glumes and breaking into the separate florets at maturity. *Florets* 3–10, all bisexual and similar, except the terminal one, which may be slightly smaller. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) unequal, hairless, keeled; the lower glume (G<sub>1</sub>) 1.5–2 mm long, 1-nerved and shorter; the upper (G<sub>2</sub>) 2–2.5 mm long and 3-nerved. *Lemmas* (L) 3–4 mm long, overlapping, broader than G<sub>2</sub>, 5-nerved, membranous with broad, delicate tips and margins, hairless or slightly hairy on the nerves below the middle. *Paleas* (P) slightly shorter than the lemmas, the keel hairless or hairy, the tip slightly 2-pointed. *Anthers* 3, about 1 mm long.

In southeast Queensland, this European grass is a weed of damp and shaded places, particularly of lawns, where it appears only in winter and spring, and flowers profusely throughout that time. It is rarely found in pastures, and although palatable to stock, is of low productivity.

### REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),<sup>1</sup> p. 1915; Gardner (1952),<sup>2</sup> pp. 106–10; Burbidge and Gray (1970),<sup>3</sup> pp. 28–29; Vickery (1970);<sup>4</sup> Willis (1970),<sup>5</sup> pp. 95–100; Beadle *et al.* (1972),<sup>6</sup> pp. 634–35; Black (1978),<sup>7</sup> pp. 151–57; Jessop (1981),<sup>8</sup> pp. 430–31.

### KEY TO SPECIES

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|---|--|
| 1. Annual, rarely over 30 cm high; leaves smooth. Usually found in lawns or fallow areas. Winter flowering (annual poa or winter grass)   | <i>P. annua</i> <sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8</sup> |
| Perennials, generally more than 30 cm high, tufted or rhizomatous; leaves more or less rough.   | 2  |
| 2. Tussock grasses; leaf blades very narrow, closely folded or rolled.  | 3  |
| Grasses not forming tussocks; leaf blades narrow to broad, loosely folded or flat.  | 4  |
| 3. Lemmas hairy in lower part on keels and lateral nerves, but usually not between nerves; callus with well-developed, web-like hairs; palea not finely hairy in lower half (tussock grass) | <i>P. labillardieri</i> <sup>4,7</sup>     |

- Lemmas hairy between nerves on lower back, often with longer hairs on keel, lateral nerves and margins; web-like hairs on callus absent or not well-developed; palea finely hairy in lower half (fineleaf tussock grass)
- (*P. labillardieri* and *P. sieberana* are often difficult to distinguish. The former usually occurs on moister alluvial soils, the latter on drier or more stony sites of coastal or subcoastal areas.)
- P. sieberana*<sup>4</sup>
4. Ligule 1 mm long, plants with short horizontal rhizomes. Ligule usually 2.5 mm long. *P. cheelii*<sup>4</sup>  
5
  5. Leaf blades broad and flat, 4–15 mm wide. Spikelets 3–5 mm long, 2–4-flowered. Rainforest margins (Queensland poa) *P. queenslandica*<sup>4,6</sup>  
6  
Leaf blades narrow, flat or somewhat folded, usually less than 4 mm wide.
  6. Spikelets 5–11 mm long, 5–8-flowered. Damp inland situations (sweet swampgrass) *P. fordeana*<sup>4,7,8</sup>  
Spikelets 4–6 mm long, 2–5-flowered. Southern, rare (Kentucky blue grass) *P. pratensis*<sup>2,3,4,5,6,7</sup>