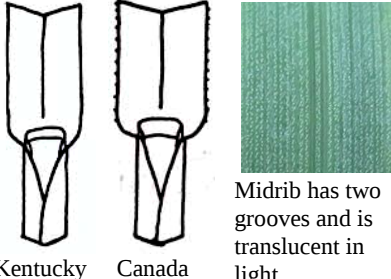
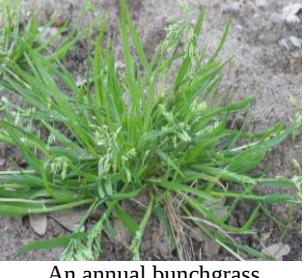
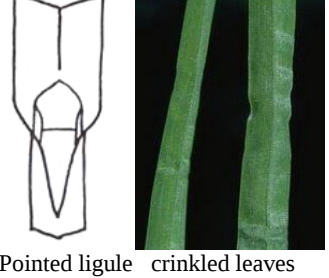
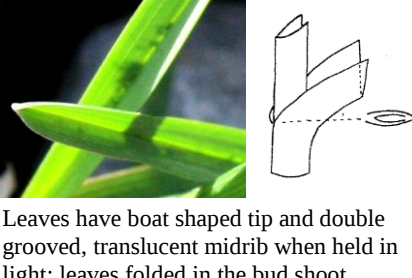
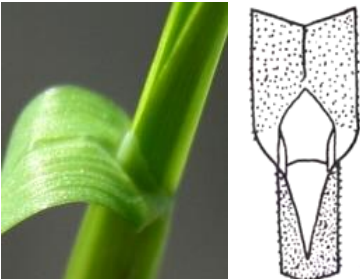
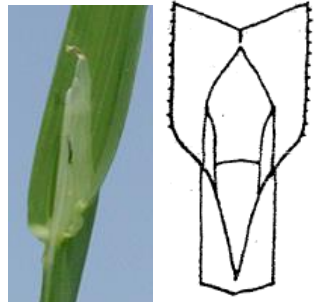
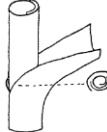
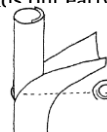
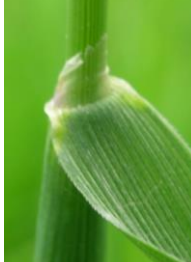
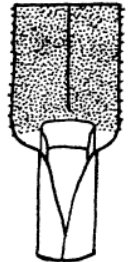
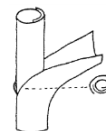
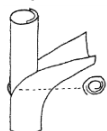
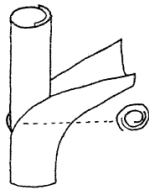
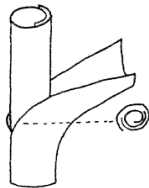
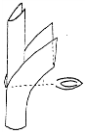
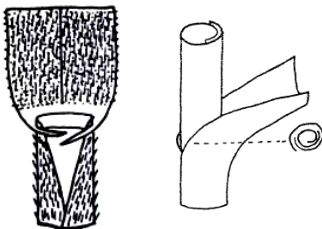
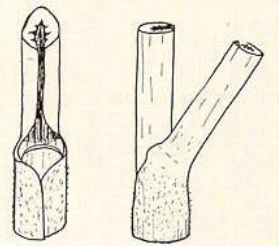
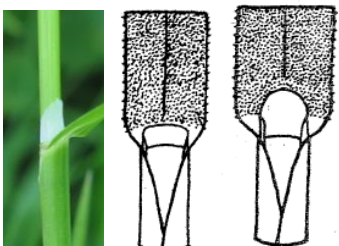
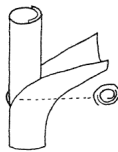
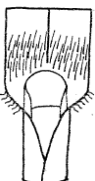


Characteristics of Forage and Pasture Grasses Found in the Northeast U.S.

Species	Growth Habit	Seedhead	Leaf Characteristics	Other Characteristics
Bluegrass (<i>Poa</i> spp.) Kentucky – <i>P. pratensis</i> Canada – <i>P. compressa</i> Short, low growing perennial grasses; they form a dense sod spreading by short rhizomes; Ky BG is dark green and Can BG is blue-green Leaves fold in bud shoot	 Many short rhizomes	 Panicle with very small seed	 Kentucky Canada Truncate ligules Midrib has two grooves and is translucent in light	 Narrow leaves with boat shaped tip Leaves fold in bud shoot
Annual bluegrass <i>Poa annua</i> An annual often found near gates and laneways where soil is compacted <i>P. annua</i> spp. <i>reptans</i> is a subspecies that is stoloniferous.	 An annual bunchgrass	 Small, short panicles	 Pointed ligule crinkled leaves	 Leaves have boat shaped tip and double grooved, translucent midrib when held in light; leaves folded in the bud shoot
Roughstalk bluegrass <i>Poa trivialis</i> Creeping perennial Prefers shady, moist areas Leaves folded in bud shoot	 Spreads by stolons; forms dense patches	 Loose, green panicle	 Pointed ligule; rough surface	 Folded in bud shoot and leaf blades fold
Orchardgrass <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> Tall growing bunchgrass; Long leaves that are lighter green compared to other grasses; Leaves strongly folded in bud shoot	 Prolific tillering grass	 Panicle seed head with ball-like clumps	 Long, pointed ligule, no auricle	 Leaves strongly folded

Species	Growth Habit	Seedhead	Leaf Characteristics	Other Characteristics
Timothy <i>Phleum pratense</i> A tall growing bunch grass; Heads out later than most other grasses; 				 
Meadow Foxtail <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> Rhizomatous sod forming dense swards; heads out early in April and May 			 	
Reed canarygrass <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> Very tall growing sod grass with extensive rhizomes; Grows best in wet soils, but tolerates well drained sites 				
Smooth brome grass <i>Bromus inermis</i> Tall growing, open sod forming grass; very tolerant of dry soils 				

Species	Growth Habit	Seedhead	Leaf Characteristics	Other Characteristics
Tall fescue <i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i> Tall growing bunchgrass although it can produce short rhizomes; Leaves are coarse and medium-to-wide; Less palatable than other cool season grasses	 Coarse textured bunchgrass	 Open panicle seed head	  Short auricle usually with hairs; Short, truncate ligule; rolled bud shoot	 Dark green leaves with “corduroy” like deep parallel grooves
Meadow fescue <i>Schedonorus pratensis</i> Tall growing bunchgrass similar to tall fescue but slightly shorter; Leaves are coarse and medium-to-wide; More palatable than tall fescue	 Bunchgrass	 Open panicle seed head	  Short auricle without hairs (smooth); Short, truncate ligule; rolled bud shoot	 Medium green leaves with “corduroy” like deep parallel grooves
Perennial ryegrass <i>Lolium perenne</i> A low to medium growing bunchgrass; Narrow dark green leaves, Leaves somewhat folded in bud shoot (oval shaped) 	 Bunchgrass	 Spike seed head without awns	 Truncate ligules; grooved “corduroy” leaves; small claw-like auricles	 Very shiny bottom side of leaf; also a very pronounced keel-like midrib
Italian (Annual) ryegrass <i>Lolium multiflorum</i> Similar to perennial ryegrass <u>but larger</u> . Leaves usually rolled in bud shoot but not always Festulolium species (a cross of ryegrass with tall or meadow fescue) will often look like Italian ryegrass	 Bunchgrass	 Spike seed head with awns	 Truncate ligules; grooved “corduroy” leaves; claw-like auricles	 Shiny bottom side of leaf with pronounced keel-like midrib

Species	Growth Habit	Seedhead	Leaf Characteristics	Other Characteristics
Quackgrass <i>Elymus repens</i> A tall growing creeping grass with extensive rhizomes, open sod; Grows best in loose soils; typically considered a weed	 Extensive rhizomes	 Spike seed head; spikelets oriented toward peduncle	 Long clasping auricles; sheaths can be hairy but not always	 Medium long, truncated ligule; leaves rolled in bud shoot
Fine Fescues <i>Festuca</i> spp. Red fescue <i>F. rubra</i> Sheep fescue <i>F. ovina</i> Hard fescue <i>F. brevipila</i> Low growing, narrow leaf perennial grasses that are drought and shade tolerant. Usually unpalatable for grazing livestock.	 Fine, narrow leaves	 Narrow, contracted panicle	 Sheep and hard fescue leaves are almost always rolled and are quite narrow	 Red fescue leaves tend to fold and roll and are also narrow
Bentgrass <i>Agrostis</i> spp. Creeping <i>A. stolonifera</i> Colonial <i>A. capillaris</i> Redtop <i>A. gigantea</i> Low growing, fine, soft leaved grasses. Often found in low, wet areas of pastures and meadows. Leaves rolled in bud shoot	 Forms soft, dense patches	 Creeping BG Panicle seed head Redtop	Creeping Colonial Redtop  Long pointed to round Short truncate Medium rounded	 Creeping growth pattern. Creeping bentgrass – stolons only Colonial BG – rhizomes and stolons Redtop – rhizomes only
Sweet Vernalgrass <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> A low yielding bunchgrass that grows in low fertile, acid soils. Produces a sweet odor due to coumarin but is generally unpalatable	 A bunchgrass	 Short, brownish, spike-like panicle	  Lacerate or toothed ligule; Leaves rolled in bud shoot	  Short, pointed leaf blade with hair at base

Credits: C.E. Philips. Some grasses of the Northeast; Purdue Un. Forage ID Page (<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forages/ForageID/forageid.htm>); USDA Plant Data Base (<http://plants.usda.gov>)

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Developed by Sid Bosworth, Extension Forage Agronomist, University of Vermont Extension, January 2014 (<http://pss.uvm.edu/vtcrops/>)