



WEEDY GRASSES

QUACKGRASS (*Elymus repens*)

Description

Perennial weedy grass 1-2 feet tall with hollow stems, wheat-like spikes and bluish-green leaf blades which are rough on the upper surface. Spikes produce seed from May to September. Quackgrass spreads rapidly by coarse, yellow-white underground stems called rhizomes (some grow as long as 5 feet).

Habitat

Quackgrass can tolerate any type of soil. It is very competitive and will crowd out desirable plants. Commonly found in lawns, shrub, and flowerbeds and also disturbed areas.



Control

Quackgrass is difficult to eradicate. Digging and carefully removing all rhizomes will effectively eliminate single plants and small infestations. However, this can be time-consuming and frustrating since any root pieces left behind will generate new plants. Black plastic is not totally effective as rhizomes spread under plastic and strong stems can break through plastic. Seeds can survive in soil up to 4 years, although most germinate in spring within 2 years. Additional management strategies are found at this link: [WSU Hortsense | Quackgrass Management](#).

CRABGRASS (*Digitaria sanguinalis*)



Description

Pale green annual. Blades are short (2-5 inches long), 1/3 inch wide, slightly hairy and tapered to a point. As the plant matures, 3 finger-like seedheads take on a purplish color and produce thousands of seeds. Crabgrass can also spread by rooting at the lower stem joints. It grows rapidly through the summer (June-October), forming broad, dense, flat clumps that smother the turf.

Habitat

Crabgrass grows best in hot, dry weather and will grow in any soil preferring light, sandy areas. It sprouts from seed in the early spring after lying dormant during the winter. A hard frost kills the plants in the fall.

Control

Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.

Additional management strategies are found at this link: [WSU Hortsense | Crabgrass Management](#)

BENTGRASS (*Agrostis* species)



Description

Low-growing, grayish-green perennial. Spreads by slender, creeping stolons and often forms extensive dense patches. Seedheads would not be seen on frequently mown lawns. Blades are narrow, flat and taper to a sharp point.

Habitat

Bentgrass is used primarily on putting greens and in lawns in the Seattle area. It is cut very short, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, as opposed to bluegrass lawns that are cut at $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 inches. If it is not cut shorter than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, bentgrass becomes matted and straggly. It is very invasive and will crowd out other grasses. It is shallow-rooted and will not survive in dry soils.

Control

Management strategies for bentgrass species can be found at this link: [WSU Hortsense | Bentgrass Management](#)

ANNUAL BLUEGRASS (*Poa annua*)

Description

Low-growing annual. Light apple green with hundreds of whitish-green seed heads at any mowing height. Blades are weak and have a boat-shaped tip. They are short, narrow and smooth. Annual bluegrass may persist as a perennial if summers are mild and moist.

Habitat

Annual bluegrass thrives in lawns, gardens, cultivated crops, roadsides, and other open spaces. It can be especially damaging in lawns, where it grows somewhat faster than other grasses and dies once it reaches maturity, resulting in undesirable brown spots in the lawn. It is commonly discovered as an impurity of lawn grass seed.

Annual bluegrass germinates in the fall and is established before cold weather. It grows vigorously through mild winters and early springs. Annual bluegrass likes cool, moist weather, damp shady locations, and moist, rich, compacted soils. It grows rapidly in the spring, especially if fertilized. It is most serious in compacted soils.



Control

Careful digging is useful to manage weed populations. However, digging can carry undesirable weed seed to the surface and foster further germination.

Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants. Hand-pull to eliminate weeds in a small infestation.

Maintaining a healthy planting or turf area to provide competition will prevent weed establishment. Water deeply and infrequently.

For additional management strategies, consult this link: [WSU Hortsense | Annual Bluegrass Management](#)