

# Blue Wild-Rye

(*Elymus glaucus*)

Where is it found? Blue wild-rye grows in every Oregon county, and from sea level to 10,000 feet. It has a remarkably wide range. It likes moisture, but is occasionally found in sagebrush. In the Wallowa Mountains sometimes avalanches scrape off most of the vegetation in a long sweep down a mountain, and next year the area may be covered by this grass. In the same way it comes into burns, logged-off places, and abandoned fields. It is usually found with strawberries, cinquefoils, asters, huckleberries, aspen, wild roses, and such plants or weeds in situations with more than average moisture.

Is it important? Yes, it is good feed except when ripe but, except on disturbed areas, it seldom makes up over 2% of the forage.

What does it look like? It is tall, usually around 4 feet when fully headed. Leaves often have a bluish bloom, and heads nearly always have a purplish appearance before maturity, when they turn straw colored. It is a bunchgrass, but the bunches are small, loose and open, and have only a few heads each. Heads are very narrow, long, and have short, straight beards.

◀ Blue wild-rye is a tall bunchgrass found in every Oregon county (1/12 x).

## Description:

Length of life--Somewhat short-lived perennial.

Sod or bunch--Open, small bunch.

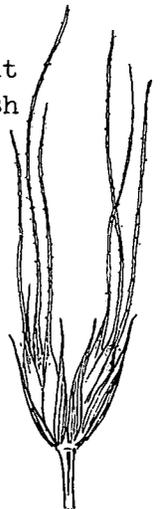
Height--Usually 3 to 4 feet.

Leaves--Often bluish cast; up to half an inch wide; taper to short tip more abruptly than many grasses do.

Spikes--Narrow, erect, usually 6 inches or longer; a joint where the spikelets appear. Usually purplish or bluish before maturity. Only a few seedheads on each plant.

Spikelets--Two at each joint (seated directly on rachis or main stem of the spike without stalks of their own); awn (beard) short, about the same length as the grain, and straight (not twisted or bent, even when ripe). Spikelets hang on for a long time when mature.

Spikelets grow in pairs at each joint of the rachis (main stem) (2 x). ▶



Does it look like anything else? When headed out, its purplish appearance of both stems and heads, its long, narrow heads with short, straight awns, and its rather open clumps with few seed stalks, make it rather distinct. Giant wild-rye has thick, heavy clumps; Canada wild-rye is seldom over 2 feet tall and has long beards; beardless wild-rye spreads by creeping rootstocks.

Lower part of plant and entire head of ► blue wild-rye. Although found in every county, it seldom makes up a high percentage of the total feed. (Plant 1/3 x, head 1 x.)

