

OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

EXPERIMENT STATION

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AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
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HARDING GRASS

by

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Harding grass is a relatively new perennial grass in Oregon. It has been tried out at the Experiment Station for several years. It is a member of the Canary grass family, and has the scientific name Phalaris stenoptera.

Not Recommended for Pasture

It principally grows in bunches, and is rather fine stemmed for its height, and not particularly leafy. The plants have rather bulb-like enlargements, a good deal like the corm of Timothy. While we have not actually tried it out for pasturing purposes, we do not consider that it will stand pasturing well, as these corms are pretty close to the surface of the ground.

The grass is extremely variable in habit of growth. It is probable that selection of the very best of the many types that are found may result in some improvement.

Winter Injury

It makes rather an attractive growth at first, but has killed out here at the Experiment Station during one winter that was not particularly severe, and which did not injure the ordinary grasses. Another planting that I observed also was partly killed out. These winter killings were not complete, but did serve to thin out the stand to a considerable extent.

Fall Recovery Slow

It grows up to a height of 5 to 7 feet, but does not appear to spread very much, or to thicken up the stand. After it has been cut its recovery for fall pasture is very slow, - very much slower than most of the common grasses, or than Reed Canary grass.

Other Grasses Better

It does not appear to be as drouth resistant as some other of the grasses, although experiments on that are not conclusive at this time. Based on the several years' observations here it is the writer's opinion that it is not as good a hay crop for the ordinary tillable land as clover or vetch and grain or timothy. And for pasture purposes, we believe that a pasture mixture, consisting of English Rye grass, Orchard grass, Tall Oat grass, Kentucky Blue grass, Timothy, and Clover, offers a considerably better type of pasture at good deal less cost per acre. For soils that are inclined to be rather swampy, we believe that the Reed Canary grass is by far the best grass where the water table is quite high.