

Tufted Hairgrass

(*Deschampsia caespitosa*)



Where does it grow? Tufted hairgrass occurs throughout Oregon and grows in the cool, moist areas of the spruce-fir belt in elevations from 4000 feet to . above timberline. In well-watered parks and meadows, it often grows in pure stands which, on the more favorable sites, form a nearly complete ground cover. It is never found in dense shade and although preferring open sites, it is common in partial shade among willows and in open timber.

Is it important? Yes, it is relished by all classes of stock. Due to its tendency to grow in cool, moist situations, it remains green and succulent throughout the season and is grazed avidly during the entire summer. It is also densely tufted and withstands grazing and trampling exceedingly well. Under excellent growing conditions it is cut for hay and sometimes yields as much as $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of hay per acre.

Tufted hairgrass is one of the most widely distributed of the Western range grasses.

What does it look like? Tufted hairgrass is a densely tufted, erect grass, 2-4 feet high, with numerous basal leaves. Its foliage is abundant and varies in texture from rather fine to moderately coarse, depending upon the conditions of the growing site.

The leaves, growing mostly from near the base of the plant, are bright green and either flat, folded, or sometimes inrolled.

The stems are usually erect and unbranched.

A member of the oat tribe (Aveneae), its individual flower clusters (spikelets), although very much smaller, resemble those of cultivated oats. Its spikelets are two-flowered, small, shining, and are often purplish.

They are borne near the ends of an open many branched seedhead. Flowering occurs from July into August.

Description:

Length of Life--long-lived perennial.

Height--2 to 4 feet.

Growth Period--July 15 to August 15 and sometimes into September.

Seed shatters in late August and early September.

How does it spread?--Seeds and tillering.

Leaves--Either flat, folded, or sometimes inrolled.

Does it look like anything else? It is most likely to be confused with redtop (Agrostis alba), a member of the redtop tribe, from which it can be distinguished because it has 2 florets or seeds in each spikelet, whereas the redtops have only one floret per spikelet. It is also similar to slender hairgrass (Deschampsia elongata) but can be distinguished because it is a more robust plant and its seedhead is open, dense, and wide-spreading whereas the seedhead of slender hairgrass, while loose, is narrow.