

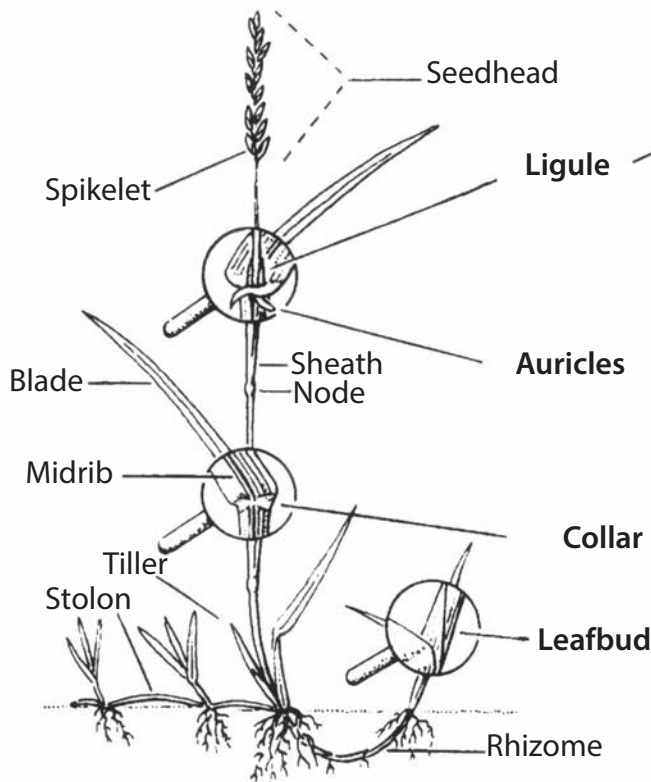


Identification is an important aspect of turfgrass management. The seedhead, the main identifying feature, is not present in mowed turf. Turfgrass managers must learn to identify grasses by their vegetative characteristics. Vegetative identification of grasses relies on a few structures: leaf bud (folded or rolled), ligule (absent, hairy, or membranous), auricles (absent or

present), hairs on the leaf blade or sheath, and growth habit (clump-type or spreading by stolons or rhizomes).

Identifying features are shown below. If you are still not sure, contact your local K-State Research and Extension office for help with identification.

## Parts of a Grass Plant



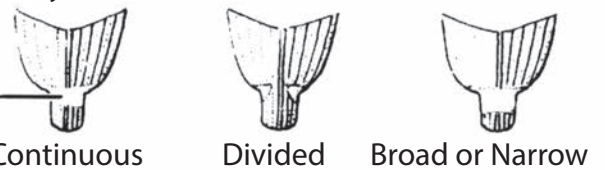
### Ligules May Be



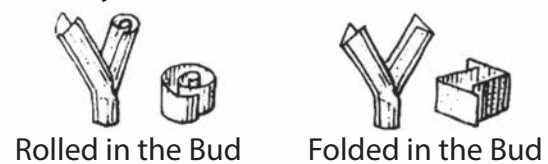
### Auricles May Be



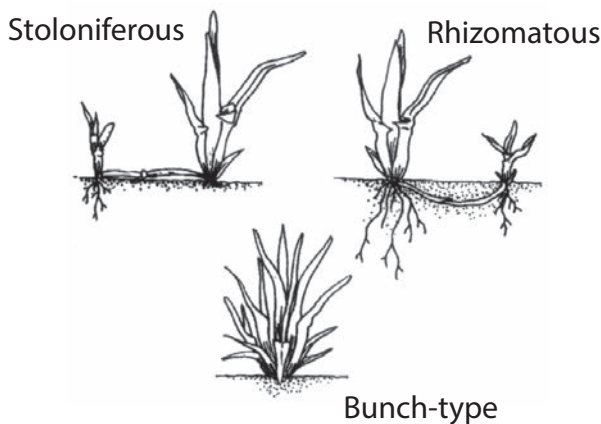
### Collars May Be



### Leafbuds May Be



## Growth Habit May Be



**Ligule.** A thin projection from the top of the leaf sheath in grasses; it may be a fringe of hairs, membranous, or absent.

**Auricle.** A claw-like appendage projecting from the collar of the leaf.

**Collar.** The area on the outer side of the leaf where the blade and the sheath join. It is generally much lighter in color and varies in size and shape from species to species.

**Sheath.** Lower part of the leaf that wraps around or encloses the stem.

**Blade.** The upper portion of the leaf, which is separated from the sheath by the collar and the ligule.

**Rhizomes.** An underground stem that produces a new plant.

**Stolons.** A horizontal, above-ground stem that takes root at various intervals and gives rise to new plants.

## Turfgrass Identification (Cool-Season)

### Annual Ryegrass, *Lolium multiflorum*

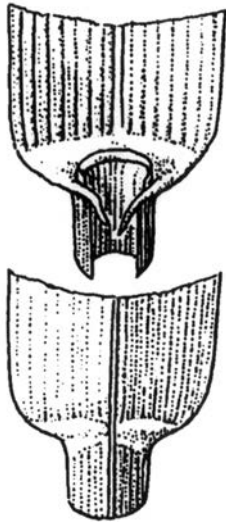
**Leaf bud:** Leaves rolled in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule membranous, short. Collar broad.

**Auricles:** Auricles narrow, long, and claw-like.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths not compressed, yellowish-green at the base  
Blades long,  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch to  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch wide, tapered, prominent veins above, very glossy below, edges smooth.

**Growth habit:** Bunchgrass.



### Creeping Bentgrass, *Agrostis stolonifera*

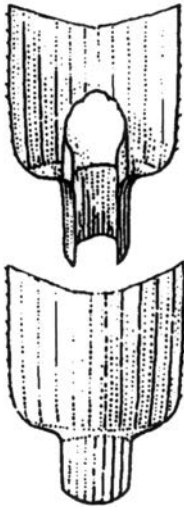
**Leaf bud:** Leaves rolled in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule membranous, tall, rounded. Collar narrow.

**Auricles:** Auricles absent.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths smooth, not compressed. Blades narrow,  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch wide, flat veined, round along the edges.

**Growth habit:** Stoloniferous.



### Fine Fescue, *Festuca* spp.

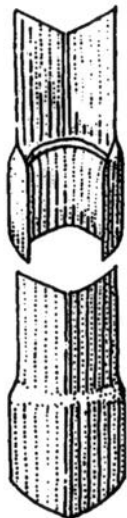
**Leaf bud:** Leaves folded in the bud.

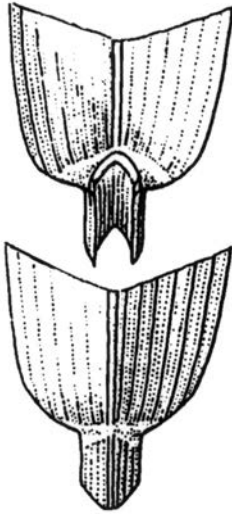
**Ligule:** Ligule membranous, very short. Collar narrow, indistinct.

**Auricles:** Auricles absent.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths slightly rough, not compressed, wider than the blades, lower sheaths brown. Blades very narrow,  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch wide or less, bristle-like.

**Growth habit:** Rhizomatous.





### **Kentucky Bluegrass, *Poa pratensis***

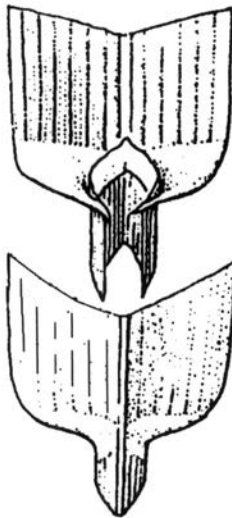
**Leaf bud:** Leaves folded in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule membranous, very short, abrupt. Collar narrow.

**Auricles:** Auricles absent.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths green, compressed smooth. Blades long, less than 1/8 inch wide, the edges parallel to each other, terminating in a prominent mid-vein, "boat-shaped" tip.

**Growth habit:** Rhizomatous.



### **Perennial Ryegrass, *Lolium perenne***

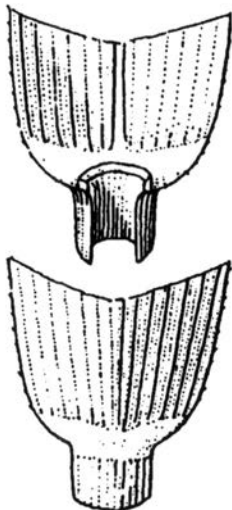
**Leaf bud:** Leaves folded in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule membranous, medium tall, toothed near the tip. Collar narrow.

**Auricles:** Auricles short, not clasping the stem.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths reddish below ground, smooth. Blades from 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch wide, prominently veined above, very glossy, and smooth beneath.

**Growth habit:** Bunchgrass.



### **Tall Fescue, *Lolium arundinacea* (Syn *Schedonorus arundinaceus*)**

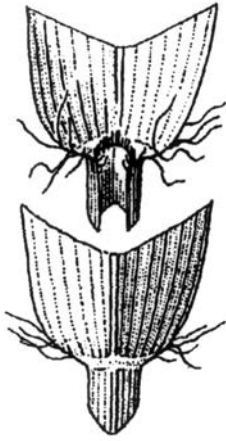
**Leaf bud:** Leaves rolled in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule membranous, short. Collar broad, continuous.

**Auricles:** Auricles blunt, short, pubescent.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths not compressed, reddish-pink below ground. Blades flat, 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch wide, strongly veined above, rough along the edges, sharp pointed.

**Growth habit:** Bunchgrass.



## Turfgrass Identification (Warm-Season)

### Bermudagrass, *Cynodon dactylon*

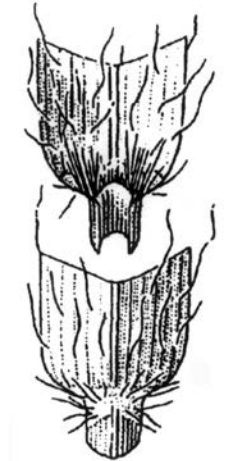
**Leaf bud:** Leaves folded in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule a fringe of hairs. Collar narrow, covered with long hairs.

**Auricles:** Auricles absent.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths strongly compressed, sparsely hairy. Blades short, 1/8 inch wide, rough along the edges, sharp pointed.

**Growth habit:** Stoloniferous and rhizomatous.



### Buffalograss, *Buchloe dactyloides*

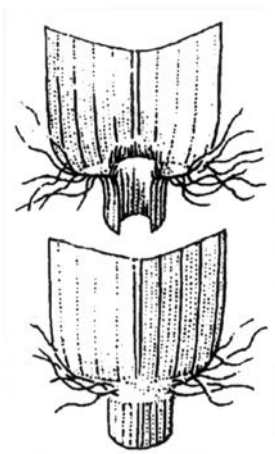
**Leaf bud:** Leaves rolled in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule a fringe of hairs, short in the center, long at the edges. Collar broad, hairy.

**Auricles:** Auricles absent.

**Sheaths:** Sheaths short, flattened, smooth. Blades less than 1/8 inch wide, flat, twisted or curled, sparsely hairy.

**Growth habit:** Stoloniferous.



### Zoysiagrass, *Zoysia japonica*

**Leaf bud:** Leaves rolled in the bud.

**Ligule:** Ligule a fringe of hairs. Collar medium, covered with long hairs.

**Auricles:** Auricles absent.

**Sheaths:** Blades short, 1/8 inch wide, sharp pointed sparsely hairy on top side.

**Growth habit:** Stoloniferous and rhizomatous.

Jared Hoyle, Turfgrass Specialist

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