



Tall Fescue

O & T Guide W-17

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Tall fescue, *Festuca arundinacea*, is a non-native perennial grass that is sometimes planted as turf but can escape cultivation and become weedy. The plant has pronounced stem nodes, ribbed leaves that are rough to the touch, and produces seeds on openly branched stems. It is also known as reed fescue, coarse fescue, and alta fescue.

The stems are erect, round in cross-section, with pronounced nodes, and grow between 15 in. and 5 ft. tall. The leaves are mostly flat (rolled when budding), green to dark green, with ribbed veins on the upper surfaces, and rough edges. The base of each leaf forms a sheath that extends down the stem; leaf bases are broad, sometimes yellow, and often have two small, claw-like projections (auricles).



Seeds are borne on numerous slender branches found at the stem ends. The branches are 2.0-4.5 in. long and are often open and spreading when the plant reaches maturity. There are about 5-15 seeds per branch; each seed is 0.3-0.6 in. long and is attached to the branch by a short stalk. The plant produces a fibrous root system that can grow up to 20 in. deep, as well as short rhizomes near the base. It reproduces from seed and vegetatively from rhizome fragments.





Management:

- Physical removal must remove as much of the root/rhizome system as possible
- Vigorous, healthy turf can compete with fescue and reduce infestation
- Herbicides are effective

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