

# Fescue, Tall

[*Festuca arundinacea* Schreb.]

Tall fescue is the most widely grown cool-season species in North Carolina. For a cool-season species, tall fescue is tolerant to heat and drought, disease resistant, and persists with minimum care. It has a tendency to clump due to its bunch-type growth habit and may need to be re-seeded each year in areas that exhibit thin growth patterns due to excessive summer stresses. Tall fescue is easily confused with Kentucky bluegrass, annual ryegrass, and perennial ryegrass. However, Kentucky bluegrass has a boat-shaped leaf tip and distinctive light-colored lines on both sides of the midrib. Tall fescue has rolled veneration in the leaf bud and perennial ryegrass has folded veneration. Also, tall fescue has rough leaf blade margins whereas annual and perennial ryegrass have smooth ones. Tall fescue and perennial ryegrass both have non-clasping auricles, whereas annual ryegrass has clasping auricles. The backside of the tall fescue leaf blade is less glossy than that of annual ryegrass.



Characteristic	Description
Seedhead / Flower	terminal panicle
Vernation Type	leaves rolled in the bud
Ligule Type	membranous; collar-like, 0.02 inches (0.5 mm) or less long, very jagged
Growth Season / Life Cycle	cool season turf or perennial weed
Auricle Type	rudimentary; non-clasping, small, short, hairs on edges
Leaf Blade Tip Shape	sharp-pointed; deeply ridged above, glossy below, prominent midrib below, edges rough
Leaf Blade Width	
Stolon Presence	absent
Rhizome Presence	occasional and short
Collar Type	divided; may be hairy on edges
Sheath Margin	open
Sheath Type	round; sheath is smooth



tall fescue vernation



tall fescue ligule, auricles

**Note:** Still not sure this is the right turfgrass? [The Turf & Weed Identification Decision Aid](#) may help. Check the TurfFiles [glossary](#) for definitions of unfamiliar terms.

Need help in selecting the best turfgrass for your particular situation? The [Turf/Cultivar Selection Decision Aid](#) will help you sort through the options which are available. For more information on turfgrass/cultivar selection, establishing a new lawn, caring for a new lawn, or renovating a lawn, see [AG-69, Carolina Lawns](#). For management information, check the [maintenance calendar](#).

## **Diseases Which May Affect This Turfgrass**

[brown patch](#)  
[damping off](#)  
[dollar spot](#)  
[fairy ring](#)  
[gray leaf spot](#)  
[gray snow mold](#)  
[net blotch](#)  
[Pythium blight](#)  
[Pythium root rot](#)  
[red thread](#)  
[rust](#)  
[slime mold](#)  
[white patch](#)  
[yellow patch](#)

*© North Carolina State University. This information sheet was prepared by Arthur H. Bruneau, Bridget R. Lassiter, Gail G. Wilkerson, Emily J. Erickson, Casey Reynolds, Jenifer J. Reynolds, and Gregory S. Buol. Department of Crop Science, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, North Carolina State University. Prepared April 29, 2008. Available on-line at [www.turffiles.ncsu.edu](http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu). This publication was made possible through a grant provided by the Center for Turfgrass Environmental Research & Education (CENTERE) whose purpose is to support worthwhile projects that will benefit both the private sector and the public, and protect the environment.*