

Annual bluegrass: *Poa annua*



Photo by: R. Parker

Use IPM (Integrated Pest Management) for most successful weed management.

Family: Poaceae (Graminae)

Cycle: Annual

Plant Type: Grass

Biology

Description: Annual bluegrass leaves are folded in the bud and have a distinct midvein. The leaves are about 1/8 inch wide and cupped at the tip like the prow of a canoe. The ligule, occurring at the point where the leaf blade joins the leaf sheath, is small, membranous, and slightly pointed. Leaves and stems are smooth. The seeds are borne in a loose, open panicle (a branching seed head roughly triangular in outline). Overall, the plant is light green, with spreading to erect flattened stems growing two to twelve inches long. Annual bluegrass often forms dense clumps. Flowering and seed production typically occurs from March to August. Annual bluegrass often goes dormant in hot weather, resulting in unattractive brown patches in lawns. There are both annual and perennial types of annual bluegrass.

Habitat: Annual bluegrass thrives in lawns, gardens, cultivated crops, roadsides, and other open spaces. It can be especially damaging in lawns, where it grows somewhat faster than other grasses and dies once it reaches maturity, resulting in undesirable brown spots in the lawn. It is commonly discovered as an impurity of lawn grass seed.

Management Options

- Careful digging is useful to manage weed populations. However, digging can carry undesirable weed seed to the surface and foster further germination.
- Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.
- Handpull to eliminate weeds.
- Maintaining a healthy planting or turf area to provide competition will prevent weed establishment.
- Chemical management options are outlined in the PNW Weed Management Handbook available through OSU at 1-800-561-6719. There is also information for home gardeners at

<http://pep.wsu.edu/oregonhortsense>.