

# Common grass weeds in Townsville



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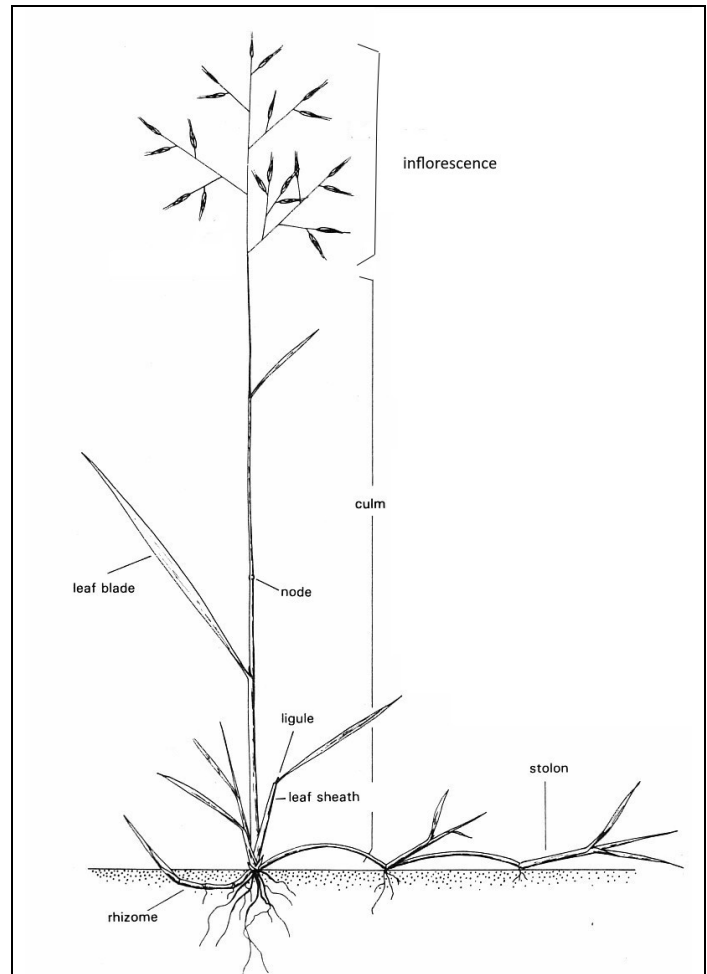
# Common grass weeds in Townsville

This booklet contains 27 full size images of common weedy grasses around Townsville area.

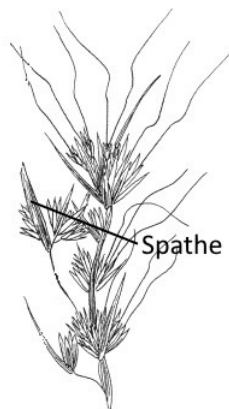
When your working at weeding and revegetating places, it is better to identify these grasses. The best way to do this is by looking at the flowers (florets). Different grasses have different arrangements of the flower head (inflorescence). I have organised them into 5 different inflorescence types which will make them easier to identify.

## The Grass Plant

- Inflorescence - flowers.
- Culm - stem.
- Node - the part of the stem (usually jointed) from which the leaf arises.
- Ligule - a membranous or hairy appendage at the junction between sheath and blade.
- Stolon - a trailing stem that produces roots at the nodes.
- Rhizome - an underground stem, usually growing horizontally, producing roots at the nodes



## Group 1: Inflorescence with a spathe (modified leaf)

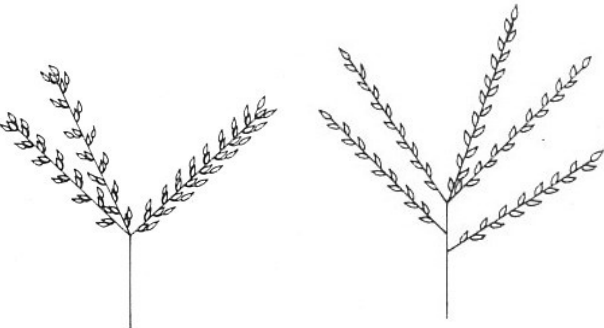


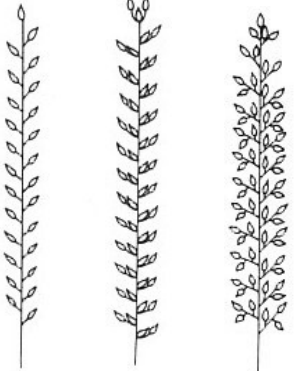
*Andropogon gayanus* - Gamba grass

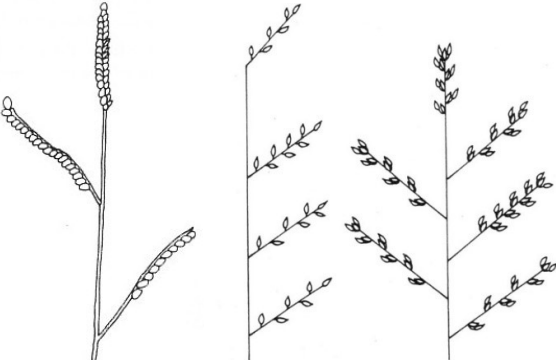
*Hyparrhenia rufa* - Thatch grass


*Themeda quadrivalvis* - Grader grass

Scans on pages 3-5

Group 2: Digitate or sub-digitate inflorescence	
	<p><i>Bothriochloa pertusa</i> - Indian bluegrass</p> <p><i>Chloris gayana</i> - Rhodes grass</p> <p><i>Chloris inflata</i> - Purple Rhodes grass</p> <p><i>Dactyloctenium aegyptium</i> - Coast finger grass</p> <p><i>Digitaria ciliaris</i> - Summer grass</p> <p><i>Eleusine indica</i> - Crowsfoot grass</p> <p>Scans on pages 6-11</p>

Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched	
	<p><i>Cenchrus ciliata</i> - Buffel grass</p> <p><i>Cenchrus echinatus</i> - Mossman River burr</p> <p><i>Cenchrus setaceus</i> - Fountain grass</p> <p><i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i> - Olive hymenachne</p> <p><i>Setaria pumila</i> - Pale pigeon grass</p> <p><i>Setaria phacelata</i> - South African pigeon grass</p> <p><i>Sporobolus fertilis</i> - Giant Parramatta grass</p> <p><i>Sporobolus jacquemontii</i> - American rat's grass</p> <p>Scans on pages 12-19</p>

Group 4: Inflorescence a once-branched panicle	
	<p><i>Echinochloa colona</i> - Awnless barnyard grass</p> <p><i>Echinochloa crus-galli</i> - Barnyard grass</p> <p><i>Urochloa mosambicensis</i> - Sabi grass</p> <p><i>Urochloa mutica</i> - Para grass</p> <p>Scans on pages 20-23</p>

Group 5: Inflorescence an open panicle with secondary branching	
	<p><i>Eragrostis cilianensis</i> - Stinking lovegrass</p> <p><i>Eragrostis tenuifolia</i> - Elastic grass</p> <p><i>Megathyrsus maximus</i> - Guinea grass</p> <p><i>Melinis minutiflora</i> - Molasses grass</p> <p><i>Melinis repens</i> - Red Natal grass</p> <p><i>Sorghum x alnum</i> - Columbus grass</p> <p>Scans on pages 24-29</p>

# *Andropogon gayanus*

Gamba grass



**Botanical name:** *Andropogon gayanus*

**Common names:** Gamba grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

**Life form:** Grass to 4 m tall

**Distinguishing features:** A tall African grass with leaf blades to 60 cm long and 3 cm wide with a distinctive white midrib.

Inflorescence subtended by a spathe; spikelets in pairs; lemma lobed and awned, awn 1-3 cm long, bent, column twisted.



# *Hyparrhenia rufa*

## Thatch grass



Botanical name: *Hyparrhenia rufa*

Common names: Thatch grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted to 3 m tall

Distinguishing features:

Mid-culm internodes solid

Inflorescence branches paired often deflexed, each 1.5-4 cm long

Spikelets covered with red hairs (rufous)



# *Themeda quadrivalvis*

## Grader grass



**Botanical name:** *Themeda quadrivalvis*

**Common names:** Grader grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

Life form: Grass, erect or bent over, 30-300 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Prop roots usually present, ligule membranous  
Inflorescence appears congested, spatheole and callus  
hairs reddish. Spikelets 4-7 mm long  
Awns black, column twisted, less than 7 cm long



Group 2: Digitate or sub-digitate inflorescence

# ***Bothriochloa pertusa***

## **Indian bluegrass**



**Botanical name:** *Bothriochloa pertusa*

**Common names:** Indian bluegrass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

**Life form:** Grass, weakly tufted, often rooting at nodes

**Distinguishing features:**

Leaves often have a ginger-like smell when crushed  
Ligule membranous, fringed. Obvious pit in lower glume  
Racemes subdigitate, usually 3-8, awns bent



## Group 2: Digitate or sub-digitate inflorescence

# *Chloris gayana*

## Rhodes grass



Botanical name: *Chloris gayana*

Common names: Rhodes grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass tufted to about 2 m tall

Distinguishing features:

Ligule a membranous rim with hairs on the edge

Spikes digitate 7-20, straw-coloured at maturity

Spikelets overlap in 2 rows on one side of rachis

2-3 awns per spikelet, about same length as spikelets





# *Chloris inflata*

## Purpletop Rhodes grass

Botanical name: *Chloris inflata*

Common names: Purpletop Rhodes grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass to about 1 m tall

Distinguishing features:

Ligule usually hairy

2-15 digitate spikes, purple

Spikelets overlap in 2 rows on one side of rachis, 3-4 awns per spikelet, at least twice the length of the spikelet



Group 2: Digitate or sub-digitate inflorescence

# *Dactyloctenium aegyptium*

Coast finger grass



Botanical name: *Dactyloctenium aegyptium*

Common names: Coast finger grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass to 70 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Plant often roots at nodes

Ligule short, membraneous with hairy margin

Spikes digitate, usually 2-4, each to 5 cm long

Awns to 2.5 cm long



Group 2: Digitate or sub-digitate inflorescence

# *Digitaria ciliaris*

Summer grass



Botanical name: *Digitaria ciliaris*

Common names: Summer grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Tufted annuals to 1 m high

Distinguishing features:

Leaf blades flat 3-10 mm wide, hairy on lower surface.

Primary inflorescence branches digitate, winged.

Spikelets paired to 3.7 mm long.



Group 2: Digitate or sub-digitate inflorescence

# *Eleusine indica*

Crowsfoot grass



Botanical name: *Eleusine indica*

Common names: Crowsfoot grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted from 15-100 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Spikes digitate to subdigitate usually 2-10 with spikelets overhanging on the underside of the rachis  
Each spike approximately 4-15 cm long



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Cenchrus ciliatis*

Buffel grass



Botanical name: *Cenchrus ciliaris*

Common names: Buffel grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass deep-rooted to 1 m tall

Distinguishing features:

Forms dense tussocks

Ligule a ciliate membraneous rim

Inflorescence a spike-like raceme to 15 cm long, white to pale purple. Spikelets covered with barbed bristles



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Cenchrus echinatus*

Mossman  
River burr



Botanical name: *Cenchrus echinatus*

Common names: Mossman River burr

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted to about 40 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Inflorescence a spike-like raceme with lower glume shorter than the florets spikelets completely surrounded by bristles/spines forming a burr. Spines fused for more than 30% of distance above the base, outer bristles half length of inner spines



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Cenchrus setaceus*

## Fountain grass



Botanical name: *Cenchrus setaceus*

Common names: Fountain grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

CLASS 3

Life form: Grass from 20-150 cm tall

Distinguishing features

Ligule a fringe of hairs

Leaves flat to 30 cm long and 1-3 mm wide

Inflorescence to 30 cm long, purple, involucre of hairs subtending spikelet which is on a short stalk



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Hymenachne amplexicaulis*

Olive hymenachne

Botanical name: *Hymenachne amplexicaulis*

Common names: Olive hymenachne

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, robust to 1.6 m tall

Distinguishing features:

Spreads on dry land and floats in water, stems erect or spreading. Leaf blades strongly clasp the stem, prominent light coloured hairs at the base

Inflorescence a cylindrical spike 20-40 cm long



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Setaria pumilia*

## Pale pigeon grass

**Botanical name:** *Setaria pumila*

**Common names:** Pale pigeon grass

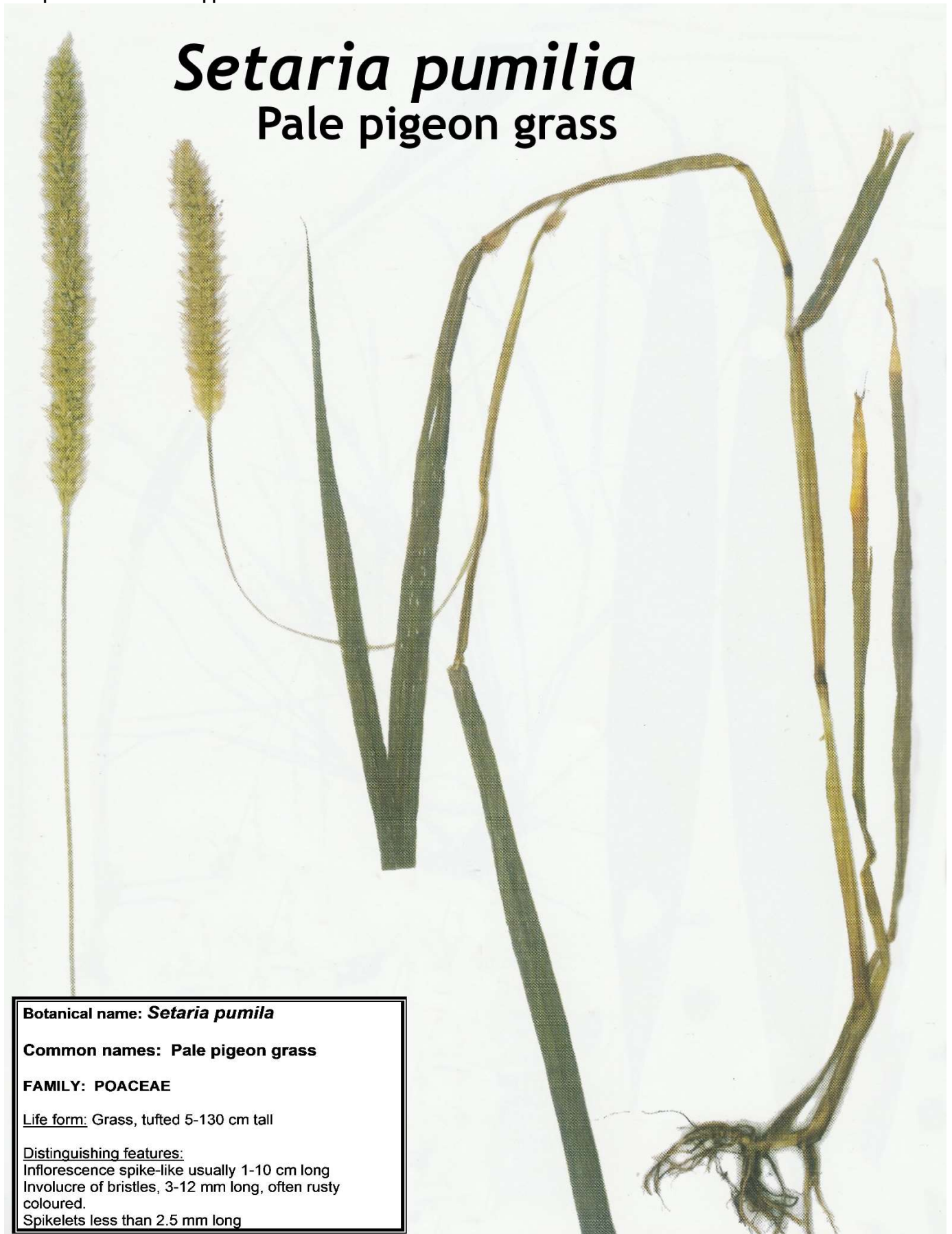
**FAMILY:** POACEAE

**Life form:** Grass, tufted 5-130 cm tall

**Distinguishing features:**

Inflorescence spike-like usually 1-10 cm long  
Involucre of bristles, 3-12 mm long, often rusty coloured.

Spikelets less than 2.5 mm long



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Setaria sphacelata*

## South African pigeon grass



**Botanical name:** *Setaria sphacelatum*

**Common names:** South African pigeon grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

**Life form:** Grass, densely tufted perennial to 2 m tall

**Distinguishing features:**

A native of Africa, a densely tufted grass to 2 m tall, it out competes local grasses

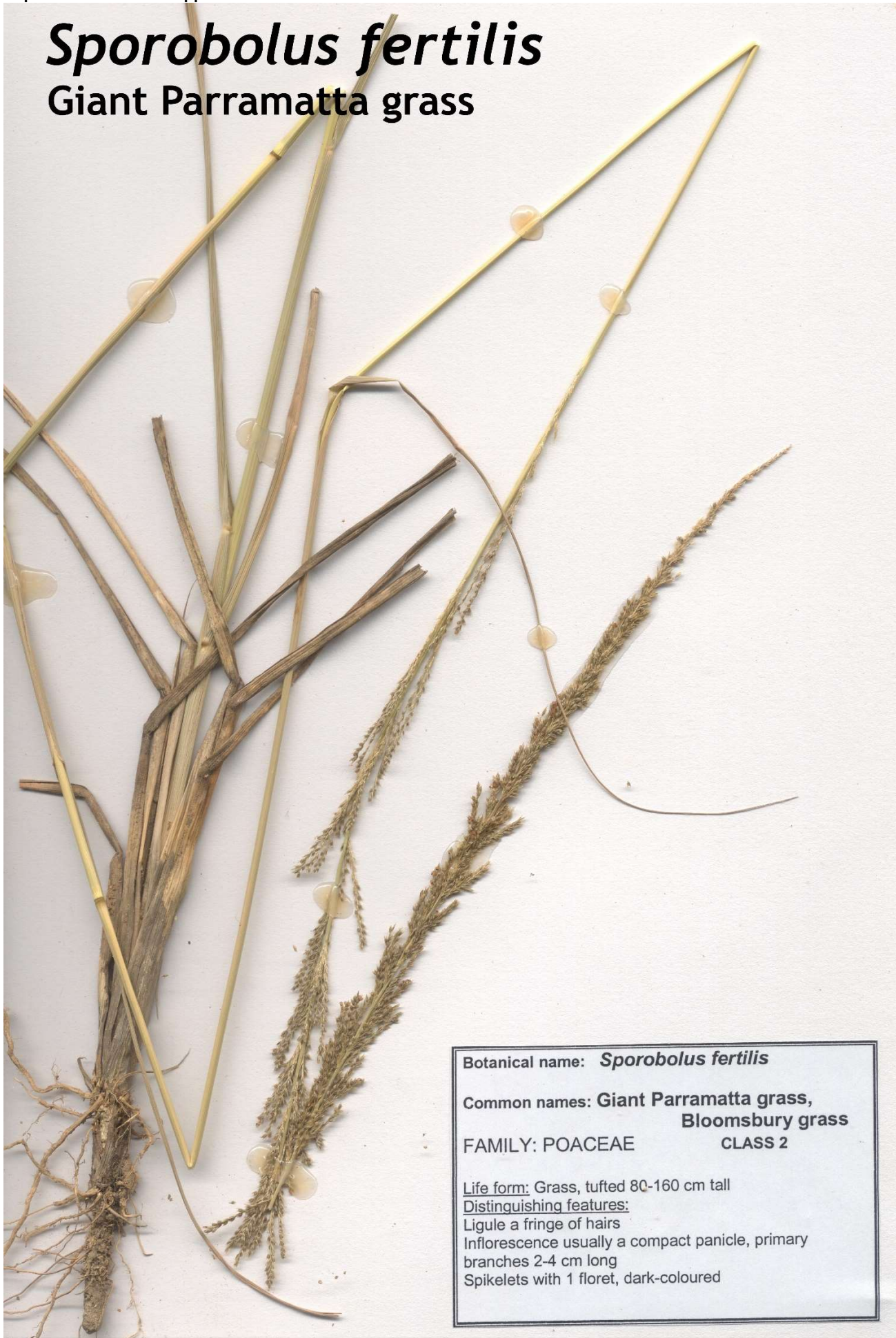
Inflorescence a spike-like panicle 7-30 cm long, spikelets to 3 mm long, often orange-tinged



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Sporobolus fertilis*

## Giant Parramatta grass



Botanical name: *Sporobolus fertilis*

Common names: Giant Parramatta grass,  
Bloomsbury grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

CLASS 2

Life form: Grass, tufted 80-160 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Ligule a fringe of hairs

Inflorescence usually a compact panicle, primary  
branches 2-4 cm long

Spikelets with 1 floret, dark-coloured



Group 3: Inflorescence appears unbranched

# *Sporobolus jacquemontii*

American rat's tails grass



**Botanical name:** *Sporobolus jacquemontii*

**Common names:** American rat's tail grass,  
Wire grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

**CLASS 2**

**Life form:** Grass, tufted 50-75 cm tall

**Distinguishing features:**

Ligule a fringe of hairs

Inflorescence usually compact, primary branches of  
panicle 5-10 cm long

Spikelets with 1 floret, pale to dark green



# *Echinochloa colona*

Awnless barnyard grass



Botanical name: *Echinochloa colona*

Common names: Awnless barnyard grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted 10-100 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Ligule absent

Inflorescence a panicle of racemes usually less than 10

Spikelets lack awns, and hairs absent, lemma firm



# *Echinochloa crus-galli*

Barnyard grass

Botanical name: *Echinochloa crus-galli*

Common names: Barnyard or cockspur grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted 25 to 150 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Ligule absent

Inflorescence a panicle of racemes, 5-15 ascending.  
Spikelets awned, hairs usually present attached to the rachis, lemma firm



Group 4: Inflorescence a once-branched panicle

# *Urochloa mosambicensis*

Sabi grass



**Botanical name:** *Urochloa mosambicensis*

**Common names:** Sabi grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

Life form: Grass, culms solitary or tufted 20-150 cm tall

Distinguishing features

Branches bent and then ascending; nodes pubescent  
Inflorescence a panicle of usually 3-15 racemes each 2-10 cm long



# *Urochloa mutica*

Para grass



Botanical name: *Urochloa mutica* (Brachiaria)

Common names: Para grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, to 2 m tall, sometimes more

Distinguishing features:

Stems densely softly hairy, rooting at nodes

Leaves usually hairy

Inflorescence of 5-20 racemes, each 2-13 cm long

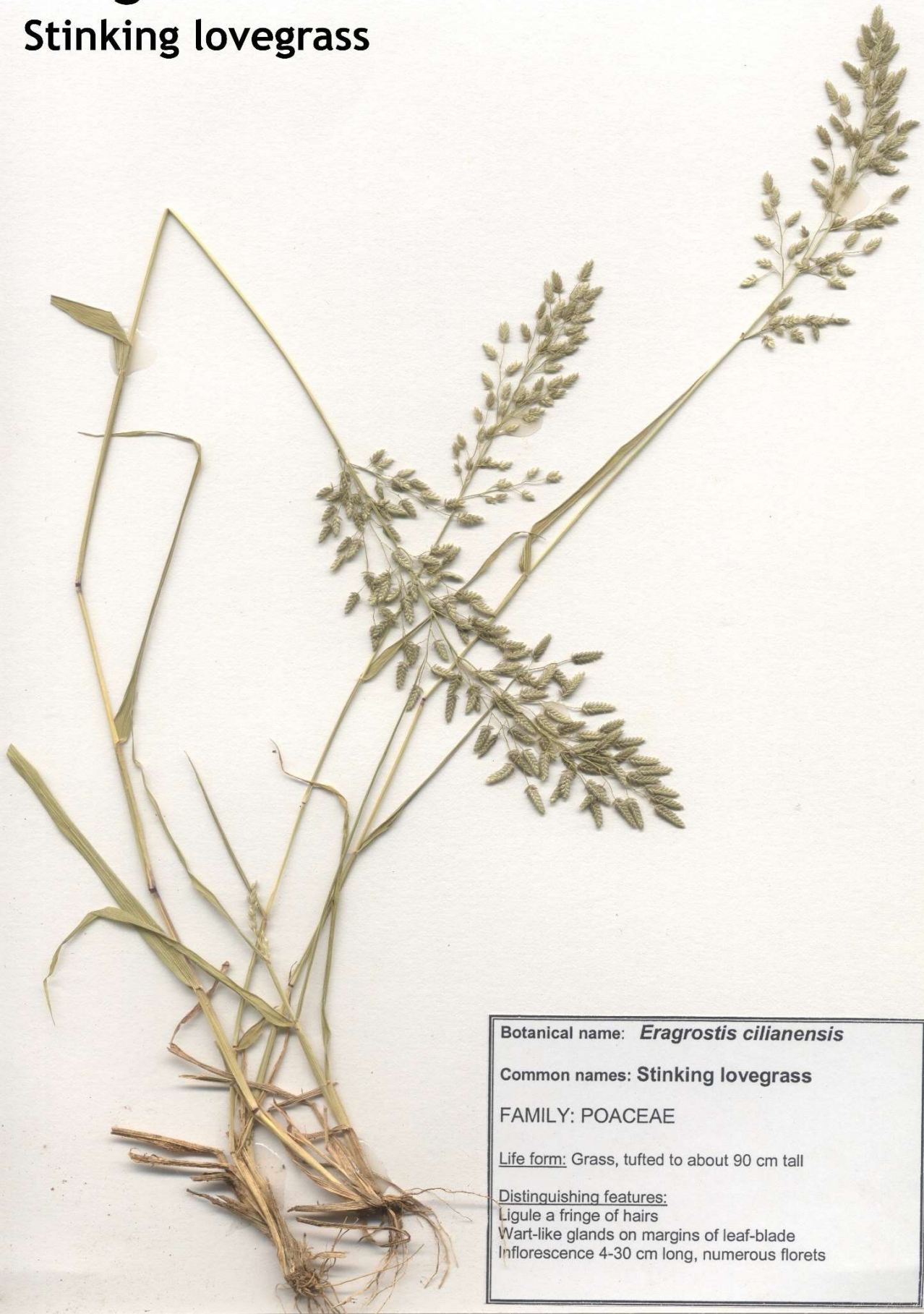
Moist or wet areas



Group 5: Inflorescence an open panicle with secondary branching

# *Eragrostis cilianensis*

Stinking lovegrass



Botanical name: *Eragrostis cilianensis*

Common names: Stinking lovegrass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted to about 90 cm tall

Distinguishing features:

Ligule a fringe of hairs

Wart-like glands on margins of leaf-blade

Inflorescence 4-30 cm long, numerous florets



# *Eragrostis tenuifolia*

## Elastic grass



Botanical name: *Eragrostis tenuifolia*

Common names: Elastic grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, densely tufted to about 90 cm tall

Distinguishing features

Ligule a fringe of hairs

Wart-like glands absent on leaf blade margins.

Basal sheath compressed, glabrous

Inflorescence to 28 cm long, 4-16 florets



Group 5: Inflorescence an open panicle with secondary branching

# *Megathyrsus maximus*

## Guinea grass



Botanical name: *Megathyrsus maximus*  
(*Panicum maximum*)

Common names: Guinea grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, clumping to 3 m tall

Distinguishing features:

Leaves long and to 2 cm wide, leaf-sheath may be hairy  
Inflorescence a panicle with many whorls to 50 cm long



Group 5: Inflorescence an open panicle with secondary branching

# *Melinis minutiflora*

## Molasses grass



**Botanical name:** *Melinis minutiflora*

**Common names:** Molasses grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

**Life form:** Grass to about 60 cm tall

**Distinguishing features:**

Strongly aromatic and sticky to the touch

Inflorescence purplish in appearance.

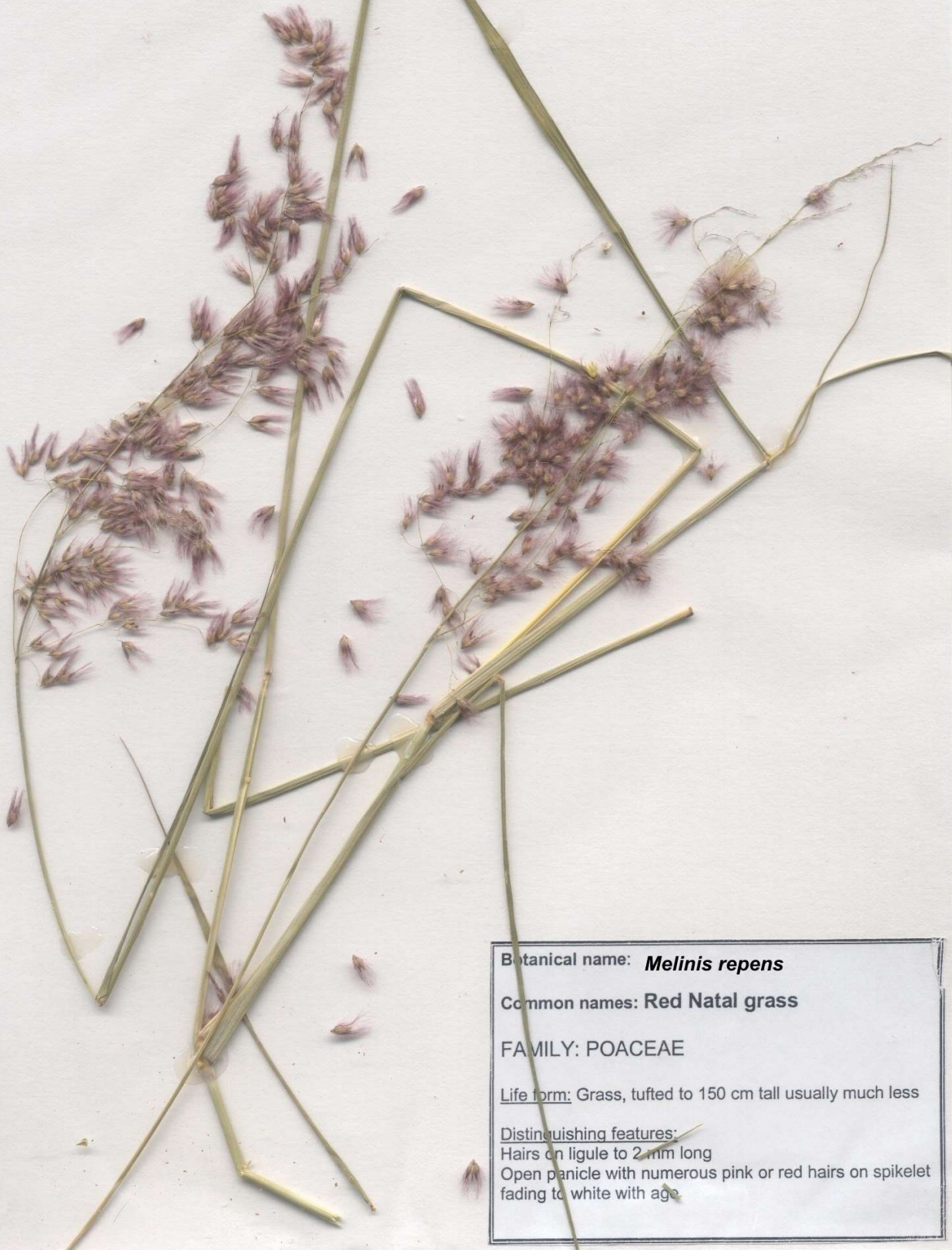
Awns present



Group 5: Inflorescence an open panicle with secondary branching

# *Melinis repens*

## Red Natal grass



Botanical name: ***Melinis repens***

Common names: Red Natal grass

FAMILY: POACEAE

Life form: Grass, tufted to 150 cm tall usually much less

Distinguishing features:

Hairs on ligule to 2 mm long

Open panicle with numerous pink or red hairs on spikelet fading to white with age



Group 5: Inflorescence an open panicle with secondary branching

# *Sorghum x alnum*

Columbus grass



**Botanical name:** *Sorghum x alnum*

**Common names:** Columbus grass

**FAMILY:** POACEAE

Life form: Grass, perennial 1-3.5 m tall

Distinguishing features: This vigorous grass as erect stems thick at the base, these arise from a thickly jointed rhizome; leaf blades to at least 50 cm long and up to 2 cm wide.

Is a cross between the weedy Johnson grass and the grain sorghum



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