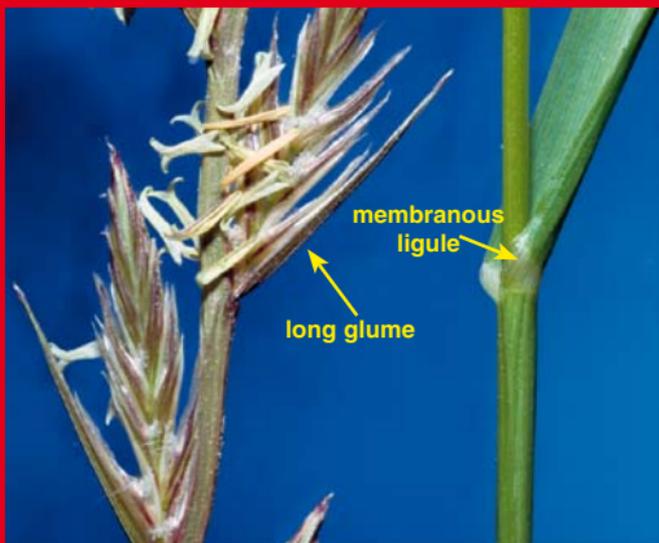


© photos G. Sainty
SALTdeck Series

ANNUAL RYEGRASS

Lolium rigidum

G1
GRASS



ANNUAL RYEGRASS

Lolium rigidum



Alternative name: Wimmera Ryegrass.

Family: Poaceae.

Description: Erect or sprawling annual grass to 90 cm tall. Leaves rolled in bud in young plants. Flowerhead usually a straight spike with spikelets set edgewise into a wavy axis (see photo). Spikelets several flowered (lemmas) mostly awnless. Seeds prolifically. Flowers mostly spring.

Key features: Plants with a reddish-purple base (see photo) and outer glume as long or nearly as long as the spikelet (see photo and compare with *Lolium perenne*). May hybridise with other *Lolium* species and the characters merge making identification difficult.

Value: In pastures it can produce large quantities of nutritious forage that can be grazed or cut. Widely used in pasture mixes.

Salinity and waterlogging tolerance: Marginal to moderate salt tolerance. Will not survive extended periods in waterlogged soils.

Notes: Native to Mediterranean, naturalised in all States. Major weed of cereal crops and has developed resistance to herbicides to the extent that rotational cropping practices are being changed. May cause staggers in young sheep.

References: *Flora of South Australia*, Jessop and Toelken (eds), Part 4, 4th edition 1986. *Flora of Victoria*, Walsh and Entwisle (eds), Vol. 2, 1994. *Flora of NSW*, Harden (ed), Vol. 4, 1993. *Plants of Western NSW*, Cunningham et al., 1981.

