

WITCHGRASS

(*Panicum capillare*)



Witchgrass, known also as tumble panicgrass, witches hair, and ticklegrass, is native to the United States but has spread to several countries in Europe. In the U.S., it is found growing along roadsides, in gardens, flower beds, and near parks particularly where soil is sandy and dry.

This grass is common in the north central states and is not frequently found in the West. Witchgrass is a shallow-rooted (1), annual species and reproduces only by seeds.

Seeds (3) are $\frac{1}{16}$ inch long, shiny, smooth, and grayish or greenish. They are borne singly at the tip of small, stiff branches of the flower head (panicle) which is from 8 to 14 inches long and often one-half the length of the entire plant. When mature the panicle is large, bushy, and greatly spread. Its branches are brittle and threadlike. Often the panicle (2) is snapped off by a breeze and carried by the wind with the seeds intact. Seeds are distributed widely by this means being easily separated from their hulls when ripe.

Depending on the length of the growing season and soil fertility, stems grow from 2 inches to 2 feet tall. They are hairy, especially at the nodes. Stems branch mostly from the base of the plant, which habitually spreads as it grows, giving a bushy appearance.

Soft hairs are found on both sides of the leaves, and are very dense and long on the leaf sheaths. Leaves are 6 to 12 inches long and $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad.

Witchgrass flowers between July and October at most U.S. latitudes, depending upon the local climate.

If this weed is not controlled by cultivation in stubble and grain fields, seeds blow to roadsides or areas not maintained, and the plant becomes established. Germinating seeds are killed by pre-emergence treatments of 2,4-D at 1 lb. per acre, DCPA, atrazine, and other herbicides. Close mowing as soon as seed begins to develop will destroy the plant and prevent it from seeding elsewhere.

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tion accomplished this quickly. An individual firm would have had difficulty slowing up the importation of cheap Canadian sod. Landscapers in the Buffalo and Cleveland areas are now reporting difficulty in bringing in Canadian sod because of lengthy tieups at Customs.

There is no grower anywhere in the United States that has not benefited one way or another from the efforts of The Sod Growers Association of Mid-America. And the association is still sitting on the taxi strip waiting for a clearance to take off!

As I mentioned before there must be a motivation, a stimulant, a common cause to bind and hold an association together. The Congress Street experiment was the original spark. The field day held at Warren's Turf Nursery in August of 1964 helped, and our Newsletter has served to a small degree to keep the light burning. For your own self preservation, for the good of the profession that feeds you, you should be a member. If you are not one now, you should join. If you are a member, you should give willingly of some of your time to help make the association a vital, strong organization.

Nothing is gained without effort. The men who have served as officers and directors of the association, since its birth in 1958, have given willingly of their time. All growers have been helped in one way or another. So why not throw in with the leaders and help your own bank accounts by becoming a full-fledged Class A member?

Rompers to Knee Pants

The sod industry is still in its infancy. It is just now beginning to get out of rompers and into knee pants. In the next 10 years it will grow to undreamed of proportions and those of you who are a part of the industry should help yourselves by helping your association into a strong organization that will carry weight with Federal, state and local governments and with builders, architects, contractors, and other commercial organizations everywhere.

For a moment, let's take a look at the potential of the sod mar-