

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Festuca arundinacea – TALL FESCUE [Poaceae]

Festuca arundinacea Schreb. (syn. *Schedonorus arundinaceus*), TALL FESCUE. Perennial herb, rhizomatous (highly condensed), fibrous-rooted, several–many-stemmed at base, densely caespitose with shoots crowded along rhizome, unbranched above, erect to ascending, 30–120+ cm tall; shoots with several basal leaves and to 3 cauline leaves, essentially glabrous. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, 2.6–4.5 diameter, internodes 30–350 mm long, glabrous; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open to closed only 3 mm at base, < internode, short on basal leaves to the longest on flag leaf, ridged, green but pale green on ridges, thin-membranous on margins with exposed margin narrower and generally overlapping most of length, with lobes (auricles) at top, the auricles clasping or descending, = a convex protrusion or clawlike, short-ciliate; ligule membranous, truncate and sometimes oblique, 0.3–1 mm long, wavy, entire or jagged to sometimes ciliate on margin; collar undifferentiated or stiff (\pm cartilaginous), glabrous or short-ciliate on margins; blade linear, 90–400 \times 2.5–9.5 mm the widest near the base (blade of flag leaf generally shorter and narrower than on other leaves), becoming inrolled, minutely toothed on margins, parallel-veined with veins sunken on upper surface and slightly raised on lower surface, glabrous, upper surface dark green, lower surface light green. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicles, panicle initially open with spreading lateral branches, 115–300 \times 12–140 mm, later contracted with ascending to appressed branches, spikelets erect, with 2–5 fertile florets + 1 diminutive, sterile terminal floret, bracteate, glabrous, short-awned; peduncle finely ridged, 190–550 mm long, glabrous; rachis straight, with 4–10 nodes and commonly 2 unequal lateral branches per node, rachis and axes of lateral branches mostly triangular in \times -section (nearly circular on lower rachis), minutely scabrous along edges; lateral branches to 110 mm long decreasing upward, at node typically with shorter branch 1/3–2/3 long branch, the shorter branch bearing spikelets or fertile branchlets nearly to base, the long branch unbranched and without spikelets at base for > 2/3 length of shorter branch, axes of branches sometimes flexuous and conforming to shape of appressed spikelets; stalk of spikelet 0.3–5.5 mm long. **Spikelet:** ellipsoid slightly compressed side-to-side, 7.2–15 mm long, 1.4–2.5 mm wide but spreading at anthesis, glabrous, breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, unequal, lanceolate, lower glume 4.5–5.5 \times 0.8–1.1 mm and 1-veined, upper glume 5.5–6.2 \times 0.8–1.3 mm and 3-veined, \pm keeled (at least lower glume), colorless on margins and at tip, glabrous, not scabrous along veins; rachilla internodes 1–1.3 mm long, scabrous with upward-pointing teeth; **lemma** awned, lanceolate to elliptic, 5–7 \times 0.8–1.6 mm, \pm convex on back, green at base to membranous on margins, purplish red between green and membranous tip, faintly 5(–9)-veined, acute and generally 2-toothed at tip with awn arising between teeth, glabrous or minutely papillate-scabrous along veins, the awn straight, 0.2–2.5 mm long; **palea** lanceolate to elliptic, 4.5–6.5 \times 1–1.3 mm, 2-veined, 2-keeled, partially enveloping ovary and fruit with margins sharply folded along vein, pale green but green along keels, glabrous. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, lanceoloid, 0.7–1.1 \times 0.2–0.4 mm, translucent, with swollen base at anthesis becoming flat, persistent during fruit development; **stamens** 3, free, exserted; filaments 2.5–3 mm long, whitish; anthers basifixed, dithecal, linear, 3–4 \times 0.4–0.6 mm long, yellow, longitudinally

dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, at anthesis 1.6–2.5 mm long; ovary superior, obovoid slightly compressed front-to-back, 0.7–0.8 × 0.3–0.5 mm, green, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, 1.5–1.8 mm long, whitish, feathery (plumose) and stigmatic nearly base to tip. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), dispersed as floret tightly enclosed within adherent palea and awned lemma + a rachilla segment, awned dispersal unit ± 7 mm long; achene oblong compressed somewhat top-to-bottom, ca. 3.5 × 1.2–1.4 mm, brown, concave to somewhat grooved (ventral face) and convex (dorsal face), with whitish flap and remnants of styles on tip; lemma mostly 5-veined, minutely toothed along midvein, awn to 2.5 mm long; palea minutely toothed along keels, membranous tissue between keels concave but free from achene, membranous margins glabrous; rachilla segment appressed, sometimes slightly compressed, 0.6–1 mm long, whitish straw-colored, with short ascending hairs.
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