

Name

Festuca rubra

Red fescue



Habitat/Range This grass is perennial and extremely variable with tufted or rhizomatous forms, of a range of sub-species found over the whole of the British Isles, from sea level to 1,080 m. Perhaps mainly associated with neutral and acidic grasslands this very common species is also a major component of saltmarsh, sand dune, maritime cliff, montane grasslands, and other habitats.

Identification The bright green leaves are extremely narrow and in-rolled, forming a dense grassland, often with a thick 'thatch' of accumulated dead growth. Generally the sward is not so tufted as that of sheep's fescue or wavy hair-grass. Ligules are very short and even, at the top of a tubular sheaf. The long (up to 15 mm), narrow and pointed spikelets are distinct from those of bents, meadow-grasses and hair-grasses. They occur in groups of 4-10 flowers on an angular little-branched panicle. The whole plant can vary between 20 and 200 mm in height.



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