



LOLIUM PERENNE* / *L. MULTIFLORUM

Botanists who have traditionally separated *L. perenne* L. from *L. multiflorum* Lam. by the absence or presence of awns respectively should check their records as both species may or may not have awns. The best character for separating *L. perenne* is the presence of folded (not rolled) young leaves on the vegetative shoots (see Stace's *New Flora*).

The hybrid between them, *L. × boucheanum* Kunth, may be common and widespread but under-recorded, as the parents are completely interfertile (Trist 1995). Hybrids are fertile with dehiscent anthers and good pollen, and need to be examined carefully; look for plants with short awns of varying length and some lemmas without awns.

The hybrid may be annual or short-lived perennial, though leaf blades are rolled as in *L. multiflorum*. The culm may be erect or nodding, with branches above and/or below. In some plants the leaves are thin and weak in structure. Spikelet length tends to vary on individual plants more on hybrids than parents, and some spikelets are widely spaced below but crowded above. Spikelets may be awned, partly awned or completely awned, with awns up to 6.0(-7.5) mm in length. The upper glumes are quite variable.

Reference Trist, P. J. O. (1995). *Nature in Cambridgeshire* **37**: 41-42.