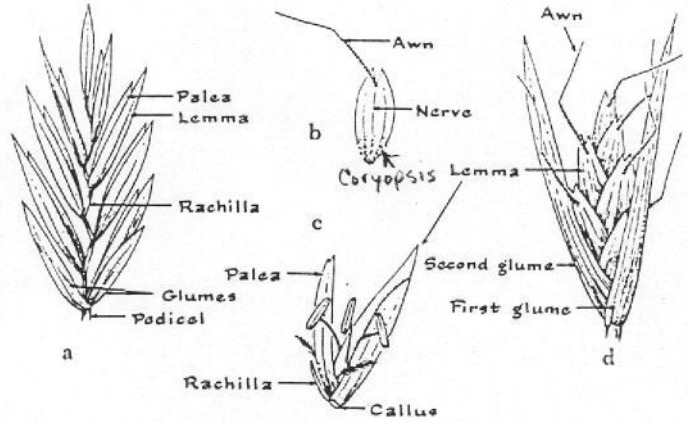
POACEAE (= Gramineae) Grass Family

Worldwide distribution and the most dominant and economically important family of flowering plants. Wheat, rice, corn, oats, sugar cane, bamboo, barley, and millet. This family provides food for the whole world, and shelter and habitat for a large portion of it. Grasses are found in all habitats from the arctic to Antarctica.

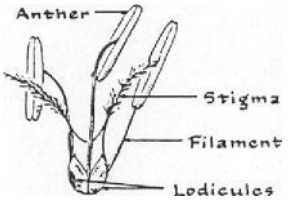
Annual or (in Alaska, mostly) perennial herbs. Fibrous roots and/or rhizomes, round hollow stems with nodes, linear leaves subtended by sheaths which wrap around the stem below the leaf blade. A ligule is found at the leaf-sheath junction. The flowers are reduced to florets which are packaged into spikelets and arranged in a panicle or spike. There is alot of diversity in floret and spikelet morphology and most of grass taxonomy is based on this, asking the student to learn a whole new vocabulary. Identification requires patience, a dissecting scope, and good keys!

Common in our area: *Trisetum* (Oatgrass), *Poa* (Blue Grass), *Calamagrostis* (Bluejoint), *Festuca* (Fescue), *Deschampsia* (Hairgrass), *Agropyron, Arctagrostis,* and several more.

New words: spikelet, glume, lemma, palea, ligule, nodes, awns, culm, callus, and more!

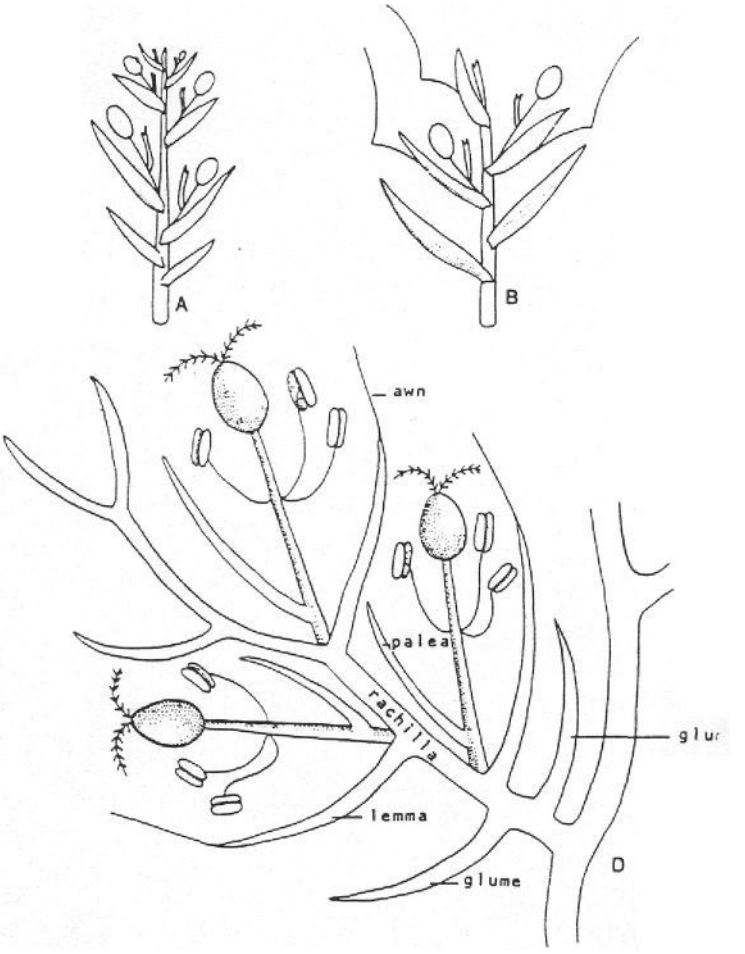


118 (a) Spikelet of bromegrass. (b) Single floret of oat grass. (c) Single floret of a grass at blooming time. *(d)* Spikelet of oat grass.



119 Reproductive parts of a grass floret.

120 Vegetative parts of grasses.



seed coryopsis