

GRASS SPOTTER SHEET

Grassland habitats benefit from careful management. Traditional breeds of cattle such as Shetland, Aberdeen Angus, Dexter and White Parks can help the grasses thrive by grazing it at certain times of the year. Timely hay-cutting and scrub clearance of meadows also helps keep these habitats in good condition.



Look beyond the lawn to spot these common species!



(c) Wildlife in a Dorset Garden, flickr



Sweet Vernal Grass

Once used as a chewing grass for its sweet vanilla flavour, this grass is the food plant for brown and skipper butterfly larvae. Look out for the broad, flat leaves and tightly-packed spikelets which flower June—September.

Crested Dog's-tail

Stiff, short and upright, the flower spikes of Crested Dog's-tail are easy to spot. Clusters of spikelets form at the end of the stem in a long, rectangular shape. Flowers June—September.

Crested Dog's-tail, (c) Oskar Gran, flickr



Wavy Hair-grass, (c) Bas Kers, flickr



Wavy Hair-grass

Wavy hair-grass is so-called because the stems are wavy and its leaves are hair like. The loose flowerheads contain clusters of purplish spikelets. A foodplant of the Wall Brown Butterfly caterpillar, it flowers in June and July.

Meadow Foxtail, (c) Dimormar1, flickr



Meadow Foxtail

This grass forms soft, dense flower-heads up to 9cm long. The anthers (pollen-bearing parts) are orange (fox-coloured!) and droop from the flower-head spikes. Flowers April—June.

Quaking Grass, (c) John Shortland, flickr



Quaking Grass

Commonly found in meadows and grasslands, especially in chalky soils. Quaking grass has delicate, heart-shaped heads which 'quake' and shiver in the breeze. Spikelets appear June—September.

Yorkshire Fog, (c) Harry Rose, flickr



Yorkshire Fog

Considered a weed when found growing among crops as its clumps of growth can push out other species. Its purple-tinted flower heads have a soft, tufted appearance. Flowers May—August.