An introduction to Grasses, Sedges and Rushes



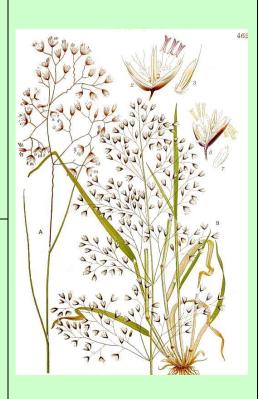
The Grass Family (Poaceae)

~ 120 species in UK ~11,000 species globally

Key characteristics

- Usually hollow stem
- Shallow roots
- Leaf blade extends from a sheath on the stem, with a 'ligule' (either a membrane or line of hairs) where the leaf connects to the stem.
- Inflorescence at top of stem holds flowers
- Wind pollinated





British wild species

- Quaking-grass (Briza media)
- Red Fescue (Festuca rubra)
- Creeping Bent (Agrostis stolonifera)
- Perennial Ryegrass (Lolium perenne)
- Cock's-foot (Dactylis glomerata)

Around the world

- Sorghum
- Pampas grass
- Buffalo grass
- Sugarcane
- Rice

- Food (Cereal crops including barley, maize, oats, rice and wheat.
- Fodder e.g. sorghum
- Building materials (bamboo)
- Canes

Master your Grasses with the Magic 5!		
BEGINNER Yorkshire fog Perennial Ryegrass Quaking grass Annual Meadow-grass Cock's-foot		
INTERMEDIATE Mat-grass Wall Barley Common Bent Tufted Hair-grass Sweet Vernal-grass		
ADVANCED Red Fescue v. Sheep's Fescue Velvet Bent-grass Smaller Cat's-tail Crested Dog's-tail Small Sweet-grass		
TWITCHER Lesser Hairy-brome Bulbous Meadow-grass Cut-grass Dwarf Sedge Soft-leaved Sedge		

The Rushes (Juncaceae)

24 species in UK ~400 species globally

Key characteristics

- Flowers in a tight bundle
- Nutty brown fruits
- Tubular, waxy thick evergreen stems
- Occur in damp places





- Crop for livestock as component of pastures
- Fuel in the treeless Andes mountains Distichia
- Basket and chair weaving
- Candles

Master your Rushes with the Magic 5!		
BEGINNER		
Soft Rush		
Hard Rush		
Toad-rush		
Compact Rush		
Heath Rush		
ADVANCED Sharp-flowered Rush Jointed Rush (Juncus Bulbous Rush		
TWITCHER		
Pigmy Rush		
Three-flowered Rush		
Dwarf Rush		

The Sedges (Cyperaceae)

~106 species in UK ~4,500 species globally

Key characteristics

- Leaves with closed sheaths and sharplyangled, some have three-edged stems
- Small hard fruits 'nuts' often in tight clusters on spikes



British wild species

- Remote Sedge- woods
- Pendulous Sedge damp places
- Green-ribbed Sedge heathlands
- Cottongrass bogs

- Paper Cyperus papyrus
- Food Chinese Water Chestnut
- Housing thatch Cladium and Phalaris spp.
- Canoes on Lake Titicaca Scirpus totara

Master your Sedges with the Magic 5!		
BEGINNER Pendulous Sedge Glaucous Sedge Cotton-grass Remote Sedge Hairy Sedge		
INTERMEDIATE Star Sedge Spring Sedge Wood Sedge Green-ribbed Sedge Carnation Sedge		
ADVANCED Yellow Sedges Thin-spiked Wood-sedge Greater Pond-sedge Water Sedge Slender Sedge		
TWITCHER Brown Galingale Starved Wood-sedge Fingered Sedge Dwarf Sedge Soft-leaved Sedge		

Wood-rushes (*Luzulα*) (Juncaceae)

9 species in UK

Key characteristics

- Tufted perennials
- Leaves flat and usually very hairy
- Range of sizes and habitats
- Flowers often have visible dangling yellow stamens





Master your Wood-rushes with the Magic 5!		
INTERMEDIATE Field Wood-rush (Luzula campestris) Heath Wood-rush (Luzula multiflora) Great Wood-rush (Luzula sylvatica)		
ADVANCED Hairy Wood-rush (Luzula pilosa) Southern Wood-rush (Luzula forsteri)		
TWITCHER Fen Wood-rush (<i>Luzula pallescens</i>) Curved Wood-rush (<i>Luzula arcuata</i>) Spiked Wood-rush (<i>Luzula spicata</i>)		

The Reed Family (Poaceae, Sparganiaceae, Typhaceae)

Vernacular term used to group numerous tall, often unrelated grasslike plants of wet places.



Ditch with reeds



- Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)
- Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris* arundinacea)
- Branched Bur-reed (Sparganium erectum)
- Great Reed-mace (Typha latifolia)
- Reed sweet-grass (Glyceria maxima)



Around the world

• Giant Reed

- Musical instruments (Giant Reed for woodwind instruments)
- Water treatment (micro-organisms living on the root system of reeds)

Master your Reeds with the Magic 5!		
BEGINNER Reed Canary-grass (Phalaris arundinacea) Common Reed (Phragmites australis)		
INTERMEDIATE Flowering-rush (Butomus umbellatus) Sweet-flag (Acorus calamus) Branched Bur-reed (Sparganium erectum) Reed Sweet-grass (Glyceria maxima) Lesser Reedmace (Typha angustifolia)		
ADVANCED Least Bur-reed (Sparganium minimum) Floating Bur-reed (Sparganium angustifolium)		





Magic 5 aims gently to introduce people to the magical and diverse world of the UK flora, simplifying, but at the same time inspiring a growing knowledge of our wild plant heritage.

There are over 5,000 species of flowering plants, ferns, bryophytes and lichens in the UK, which can be fairly intimidating. This course breaks down that flora into several bite-size chunks, and while it won't teach you every species, it will highlight important groups and allow you confidently to identify some commonly encountered flowering plant families based on several key features.

Other courses will introduce similar bite size chunks of the remaining four parts of the plant kingdom –opening people's eyes and imagination to the exciting, diverse yet often overlooked world of lichens, bryophytes, ferns and grasses whilst giving an overview of the whole of the UK flora.

- 1. Lichens
- 2. Bryophytes
- 3. Ferns
- 4. Grasses
- 5. Flowers

The Species Recovery Trust

is a charity dedicated to saving some of the rarest species in the UK, and educating and enthusing the public about wildlife around them.

More details of our work, our training courses and how you can support us can be found at;

www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk