



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Rough Rosette-grass *Dichanthelium scabriusculum*

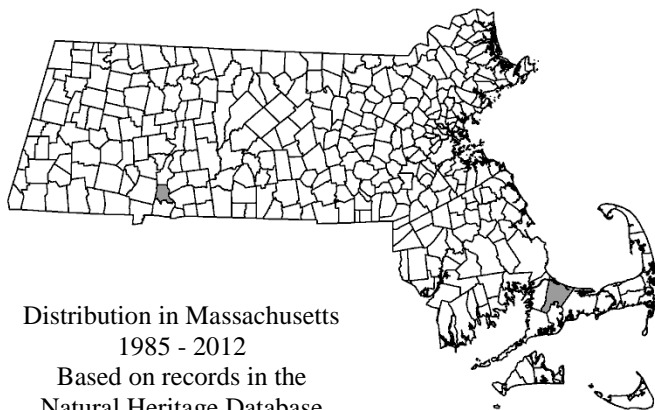
(Elliott) Gould & C.A. Clark

State Status: **Threatened**

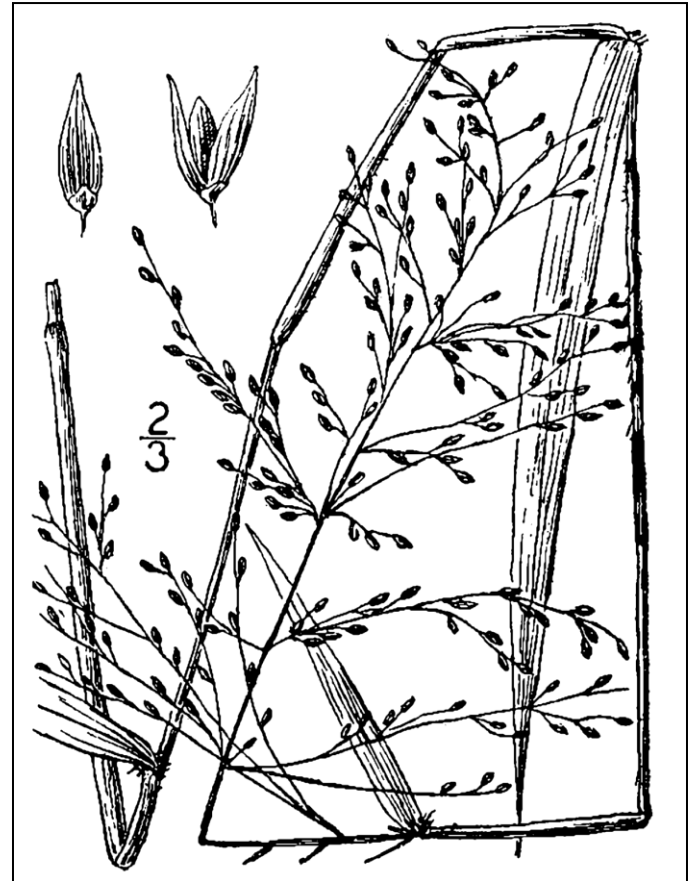
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Rough Rosette-grass (*Dichanthelium scabriusculum*) is a tall (70–150 cm) perennial species in the Grass family (Poaceae). It grows in large clumps and becomes increasingly branched and bushy through the summer and early fall. Like other rosette-grasses, this species has an open, branched inflorescence and each spikelet contains only a single floret (a small individual flower). In Rough Rosette-grass, the inflorescence is 10 to 21 cm tall. In late summer and early fall, Rough Rosette-grass produces additional panicles that are partly included in the leaf sheaths (the lower part of the leaf surrounding the stem). The leaf sheaths are hairy, and the leaf blades are 7 to 15 mm wide, 12 to 25 cm long, and taper to an involute tip.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Rough Rosette-grass looks generally similar to several other rosette-grasses. In particular, Deer-tongue Grass (*Dichanthelium clandestinum*) is very common and easily mistaken for Rough Rosette-grass. Rough Rosette-grass has narrower leaf blades (7–15 mm) that taper to an involute tip. Deer-tongue Grass has wider leaf blades (15–30 mm) that are flat to the tip.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1985 - 2012
Based on records in the
Natural Heritage Database



Rough Rosette-grass has open panicles, spikelets that are glabrous or sparsely pubescent, and membranous ligules.

USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown.
1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.
Vol. 1: 160.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: To positively identify Rough Rosette-grass and other species of *Dichanthelium*, a technical manual must be used. The following features help to distinguish Rough Rosette-grass from other members of the genus:

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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- Membranous ligules 0.5 to 1.2 mm long, often with a band of short hairs just above;
- Spikelets are 2.2 to 2.8 mm long, and glabrous or sparsely pubescent; and
- Upper glume and lower lemma surpass the upper lemma.

Flowering and Fruiting in Massachusetts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

REFERENCES:

Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*, 2nd edition. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.

Haines, A. 2011. *Flora Novae Angliae – a Manual for the Identification of Native and Naturalized Higher Vascular Plants of New England*. New England Wildflower Society, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, CT.

USDA, NRCS. 2010. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA.

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS:

Rough Rosette-grass is listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act as Threatened. All listed species are protected from killing, collecting, possessing, or sale, and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. All current and historical records for Rough Rosette-grass in Massachusetts are from Hampden and Barnstable Counties.

RANGE: Rough Rosette-grass occurs along the east coast from southern Massachusetts to Florida, west to Texas.

HABITAT: Rough Rosette-grass is found primarily along power line rights of way in Massachusetts. Other suitable habitats include dry sandy roadsides, both wet and dry grasslands, and soils adjacent to streams.

THREATS AND MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS: Careful management is needed to maintain open habitats for Rough Rosette-grass without damaging existing populations. Sites that support Rough Rosette-grass should be protected from dramatic changes in moisture conditions. All active management of rare plant populations (including invasive species removal) is subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and should be planned in close consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

Updated 2019

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