

Elymus L. WILDRYE

Elymus glaucus Buckley subsp. *glaucus*, BLUE RYEGRASS, COMMON WESTERN WILDRYE, BLUE WILDRYE. Perennial herb, not rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, several-stemmed at base, unbranched above base, ascending, 60–135 mm tall; shoots with evenly and widely spaced cauline leaves, mostly glabrous but blades and exposed internodes \pm scabrous, somewhat glaucous or not. **Stems (culms):** cylindrical, to 4 mm diameter, tough, internodes commonly > 150 mm long, often short-strigose on and just below nodes; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll lanceolate, to 17 mm long, membranous, 2-keeled, short-ciliate along keels; sheath open, low-ridged, to 180 mm long, < internode (nodes fully exposed), often short-strigose at base and somewhat scabrous approaching blades, with lobes (auricles) at top, auricles < 1 mm long; ligule membranous, truncate, 0.6–1 mm long, minutely short-fringed on margin; collar indistinct, green; blade linear, 160–400 \times (4–)6–15 mm, the widest near midblade, flat, entire and minutely serrate on margins, long-tapered to fine tip, parallel-veined with minor midrib raised slightly on lower surface to above midblade, scabrous with minute teeth along all veins. **Inflorescence:** spikelets in terminal, \pm dense, spikelike cluster, to 200 \times ca. 8 mm, having 1–2(–3), suberect sessile spikelets per node, nodes regularly spaced and alternate distichous, bracteate, conspicuously scabrous, awned; internodes of axis hemicylindric, mostly 9–13 mm long, slightly bowed, on convex outer side striped green and yellowish white, on flat-concave side facing spikelets yellowish white, scabrous along edges with ascending stiff teeth, having a shallow ledge at each node, glossy, glabrous. **Spikelet:** of (0–)1–4 fertile florets and 1–2 sterile upper florets, not compressed, with awns on glumes and lemmas of fertile florets, rachilla and callus short-hairy, bractlets at anthesis spreading ca. 30°, breaking above glumes and beneath each floret; **glumes** 2, long-acuminate lanceolate, 14–18 mm long including short awn at tip, \pm equal or subequal, lower glume > upper glume, with 3–5 veins raised on back and minutely scabrous, membranous and minutely scabrous on margins, in range awn < 1.5 mm long; **lemma** (fertile floret) lanceolate, 8–11 mm long, rounded on back or with several slightly raised veins mostly above midpoint, minutely scabrous on margins and sometimes along raised veins, glabrous to sparsely inconspicuously short-hirsute, awn terminal and sometimes appearing in shallow notch, \pm straight, in range 5–20 mm long; lemma of sterile floret reduced, straw-colored, with short awn; **palea** (fertile floret) lanceolate, 2 mm < lemma, 2-keeled, center membranous, edges near keel green, veins obscure, conspicuously scabrous to short-ciliate along keels, minutely jagged and short-hirsute at truncate to slightly notched tip, sometimes with several inconspicuous short-ciliate on margins; palea of sterile floret absent. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, acuminate-lanceolate with semibulbous fleshy base, 1.5–1.6 mm long, translucent, with short lobe attached to bulbous portion, ciliate with erect hairs on margins and on outer flat upper portion; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, 3.5–4 mm long, white; anthers fully exerted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 2–3 mm long, pale light yellow or with purple-red edges, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, compressed heart-shaped, ca. 1 \times 0.7–1 mm, pale green, appressed short-hairy except at base, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, exerted and spreading near base of lemma, 1.7–2 mm long, densely branched base to tip with branches to 1 mm long, style axis pale green. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), ellipsoid, ca. 5 \times

1 mm, tan, with longitudinal groove on palea side (palea typically adherent) and a tuft of short hairs at top. Early May–mid-June.

Native. Perennial herb occurring in shade often in transition zone between southern oak woodland and tall chaparral. *Elymus glaucus* is a larger form than the rhizomatous *Leymus triticoides*, which may occur in similar locations. Blue wildgrass is the species of *Elymus* with awns on both glumes and lemmas, and the glumes are longer than the lower lemmas.
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