

Phalaris L. CANARY GRASS

Phalaris aquatica L., BULBOUS CANARY GRASS, HARDING GRASS. Perennial herb, clump-forming, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, at maturity many-stemmed at base, cespitose, shoots erect to ascending and terminating in dense inflorescence, in range 50–170 cm tall; shoots mostly with 3–5 basal leaves and 4–6 cauline leaves, glabrous, slightly glaucous; rhizome vertical and horizontal, 2.5–3 mm diameter, white, internodes short–35 mm long, wavy ridged, solid, with large, ovoid axillary buds on vertical axes; adventitious roots nodal on rhizome and basal nodes. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, to 5 mm diameter (to 10 mm diameter at rhizome), tough, internodes to 250 mm long (midshoot); internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open (upper cauline leaves closed for ca. 1 mm), 90–190 mm long, < internode, separating to base on old lower leaves, sometimes somewhat inflated on flag leaves (with short blade), lacking lobes (auricles) at top; ligule membranous acute to truncate, (2–)4–11(–12) mm long, aging cut (lacerate), minutely scabrous on back surface; blade linear and long-tapered, 54–530 × (3.5–)7–11.5(–16) mm, the widest somewhat above sheath, flat, subentire to minutely scabrous on margins, parallel-veined with midrib visible on lower side, upper surface minutely scabrous approaching tip. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in dense, terminal, cylindric to narrowly conic or narrowly ellipsoid panicles, 40–145 × 8–25 mm in fruit, mostly with rachis concealed but sometimes with ± divergent lateral branches resulting in a slightly lobed inflorescence with exposed rachis, spikelet 2–3-flowered with lower floret sterile and only upper floret fertile, bracteate, glabrous; peduncle long, often > vegetative plant; stalk of spikelet 0.3–1.2 mm long. **Spikelet:** breaking above glumes as 1 unit; **glumes** 2, ± oblong and strongly keeled, 5.8–5.9 × 1.2–1.5 mm, 3-veined, narrowly winged approaching tip, wing 0.3–0.6 mm wide; **lemma** (sterile floret) to 1.8 mm long, if 2 sterile florets lower lemma 0.5–1.6 mm long, upper lemma 1.2–1.8 mm long; **lemma** (fertile floret) acuminate-ovate, 3.2–3.5 × 1.2–1.3 mm, 5-veined and folded along midvein, ascending-pilose to sericeous, internally glabrous; **palea** (fertile floret) 2.5–3 × 1.2–1.3 mm, 2-veined and folded between veins, ascending-pilose to sericeous, internally glabrous. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, free, acuminate-triangular with bulbous base, ± 0.6 × 0.5 mm, transparent, glabrous; **stamens** 3, free; filaments slender but somewhat stiff, ± 5.5 mm long, white; anthers fully exerted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 3.2–4.2 mm long, white, dehiscent only near tip; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, 3.5–4 mm long; ovary superior, cylindric-narrowly ovoid, 0.8–1.1 × 0.4–0.5 mm, greenish, tapered to style, glabrous, cylindric-narrowly ovoid, < 1 mm long, greenish, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2(–3), ± fused at base (if 3 stigmas, arising by forking of the larger branch), exerted and ascending, 3.8–5 mm long, translucent-white, glabrous from base and feathery-stigmatic (plumose) 2.5–3.2 mm long. Early May–early August.

Naturalized. Perennial herb originally planted on properties throughout the range as a forage grass for livestock and now naturalized and well-established in disturbed grassland and on the edges of woodland, especially growing in heavy clay soil. *Phalaris aquatica* forms conspicuous clumps that permit this species to be readily detected from a distance. This perennial species of *Phalaris* has a terminal bisexual floret on every spikelet.

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