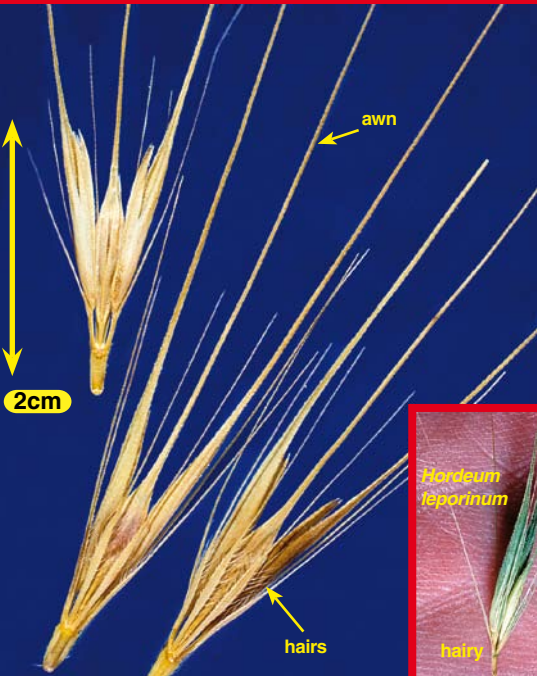


© photos G. Sainty  
SALTdeck Series

# BARLEY GRASS

*Hordeum leporinum*

G3  
GRASS



# BARLEY GRASS

*Hordeum leporinum*



**Alternative names:** *Critesion murinum* ssp. *leporinum*, Mouse Barley Grass.

**Family:** Poaceae.

**Description:** Tufted, erect or abruptly bent (kneel) annual grass to about 50 cm tall with tapered, pointed, velvety-hairy leaves (see photo). Spikelets in threes in a neat dense compact seedhead with many stiff awns.

**Key features:** Distinguished by the dense slightly flattened seedhead, clasping leaves (auricles at the leaf blade/sheath junction) and central spikelet with long hairs on the margin (see photo). Often confused with the much smaller *Hordeum marinum*, Sea Barley Grass (see photo).

**Value:** A common weedy grass that germinates with the first significant autumn rain and provides early good quality pick in winter—although it may respond to rain and flower at any time.

**Salinity and waterlogging tolerance:** Will not survive prolonged inundation, but thrives in damp soil and will grow rapidly if soil is fertile. Has low to moderate tolerance of saline soil and water and is an indicator species to delineate the margins of heavily salted land.

**Notes:** Native of Mediterranean region. Sharp spikelets and barbed awns cause major problems in sheep if they are allowed to access land infested with mature *Hordeum leporinum*. In winter, before flowering, has some value for grazing stock.

**References:** *Flora of NSW*, Harden (ed), Vol. 4, 1993. *Flora of Victoria*, Walsh and Entwisle (eds), Vol. 2, 1994. *Plants of Western NSW*, Cunningham et al., 1981.

