

Glossary of botanical terms used in the Poaceae

Adapted from the glossary in *Flora of Ethiopia and Eritrea*, vol. 7 (1995).

- aristate** – with an awn
aristulate – diminutive of aristate
auricle – an earlike lobe or appendage at the junction of leaf sheath and blade
auriculate – with an auricle
awn – a bristle arising from a spikelet part
callus – a hard projection at the base of a floret, spikelet, or inflorescence segment, indicating a disarticulation point
caryopsis – a specialized dry fruit characteristic of grasses, in which the seed and ovary wall have become united
collar – pale or purplish zone at the junction of leaf sheath and blade
column – the lower twisted portion of a geniculate awn, or the part below the awn branching-point in *Aristideae*
compound – referring to inflorescences made up of a number of small constituent inflorescences (as in some *Andropogoneae*), or a raceme with some secondary branching
culm – the flowering stem of a grass plant
culm sheath (bamboos) – modified, often non-photosynthetic, culm leaf with an expanded sheath and much reduced blade, usually deciduous as the culm matures
diffuse (bamboos) – culms arising singly from long slender rhizomes.
extravaginal – branching in which the young shoot breaks through the base of the leaf sheath
floret – the individual unit of a spikelet, comprising a lemma and palea with enclosed reproductive organs
glume – one of a pair of empty scales at the base of a grass spikelet
heterogamous spikelets – the paired spikelets found in most *Andropogoneae*, where one spikelet of the pair is sessile and produces a caryopsis, and the other spikelet is pedicelled, of different form, and staminate or sterile
hilum – the scar on the caryopsis marking the site of the attachment of the pericarp and testa, found on the opposite side from the embryo
homogamous spikelets – in *Andropogoneae* the paired spikelets sometimes present at the base of the raceme, of similar appearance and not producing any caryopses, often resembling the pedicelled spikelets or assuming a protective involucre function
intravaginal – branching in which the young shoot grows up inside the leaf sheath, emerging at the sheath mouth
iterauctant (bamboos) – inflorescence with pseudospikelets with glumes subtending axillary buds capable of partial or extensive spikelet ramification
leaf blade – the distal expanded part of a grass leaf
leaf sheath – the basal part of the grass leaf which normally encloses a culm internode
lemma – the lower of the two bracts enclosing the grass flower and together with the palea comprising a floret
leptomorph (bamboos) – rhizome monopodial, elongated, more slender than culms
ligule – a membrane or line of hairs on the inner (adaxial) side of the junction of the leaf sheath and leaf blade; bamboos sometimes have an external ligule on the abaxial side of the junction
lodicule – a small scale-like or fleshy structure at the base of the stamens in a grass floret, usually 2 in each floret (often 3 or more in bamboos); they swell at anthesis, causing the floret to gape open
oral setae – marginal setae inserted at junction of leaf sheath and blade, on the auricles when these are present
pachymorph (bamboos) – rhizome sympodial, thicker than culms
palea – the upper and inner scale of the grass floret which encloses the grass flower, usually 2-keeled
panicle – in grasses, an inflorescence in which the primary axis bears branched secondary axes with pedicellate spikelets
pedicel – in grasses, the stalk of a single spikelet within an inflorescence
peduncle – the stalk of a raceme or cluster of spikelets
pluricaespitose (bamboos) – culms arising in a series of clusters along a long slender rhizome
prophyll – in grasses, a 2-keeled, hyaline, modified leaf, placed within a leaf sheath on the adaxial side of a branch
pseudopetiole – the narrow basal portion of some leaf blades, resembling a petiole
pseudospikelet (bamboos) – spikelet in which the outer glumes or bracts subtend axillary buds which can develop to form lateral spikelets or branches
raceme – in grasses, an unbranched axis bearing spikelets; racemes may be solitary, digitate, or scattered
raceme base – short stalk beneath the individual racemes of a pair in some *Andropogoneae*
raceme pair – pairs of racemes supported by spatheoles in the compound panicles of some *Andropogoneae*
rachilla – the central axis of the spikelet which bears the florets
rachilla extension – a prolongation of the rachilla beyond the uppermost (or single) floret
rachis – the axis of a raceme
secondary spathe – spathe supporting a second tier of branching within the compound panicle of some *Andropogoneae*
semelauctant (bamboos) – inflorescence with glumes not subtending viable buds or branches
sinus – the space between two projecting lobes or teeth
spathate – with spathes
spathe – a bract or modified bladeless leaf subtending the inflorescence or part of it
spatheole – the uppermost spathe supporting the racemes within the compound inflorescence of some *Andropogoneae*
spikelet – the basic unit of a grass inflorescence; usually composed of two glumes and one or more florets on a rachilla
spikelet pair – the arrangement of one sessile and one pedicelled spikelet arising from the same node characteristic of the *Andropogoneae*
tiller – a leafy non-flowering shoot
triad – a group of three spikelets borne together
unicaespitose (bamboos) – culms all arising in a single clump from pachymorph rhizomes

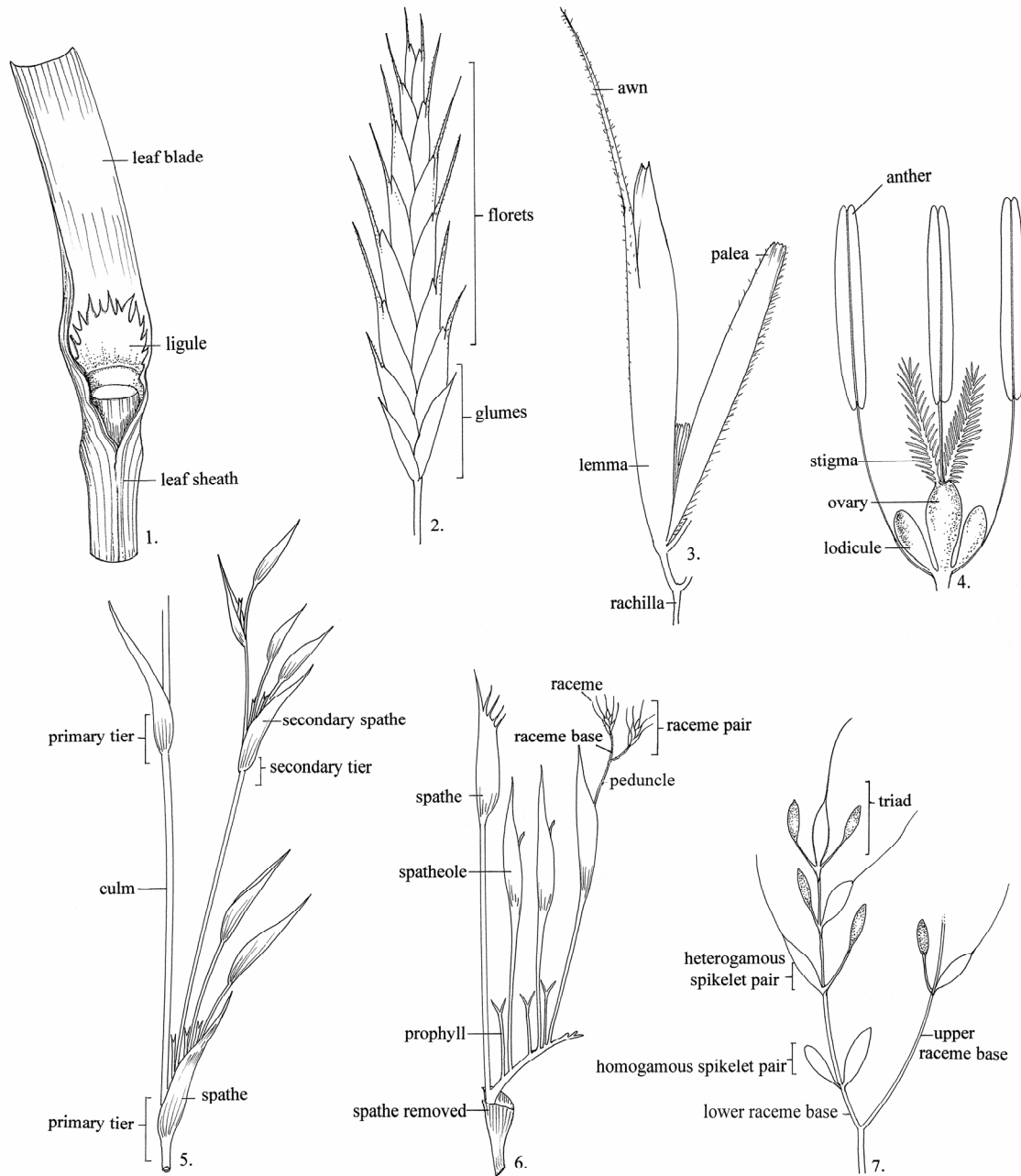


Figure 1. 1–4. Parts of a typical grass (based on *Bromus*). —1. Portion of leaf. —2. Spikelet. —3. Floret. —4. Flower. 5–7. Compound panicle and raceme pair structure in *Andropogoneae* (based on *Hyparrhenia*). —5. Compound panicle with primary and secondary tiers. —6. Compound panicle with primary tier showing raceme pair. —7. Diagram of raceme pair structure. Drawn by Yevonn Wilson-Ramsey.