



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered Species  
Program**

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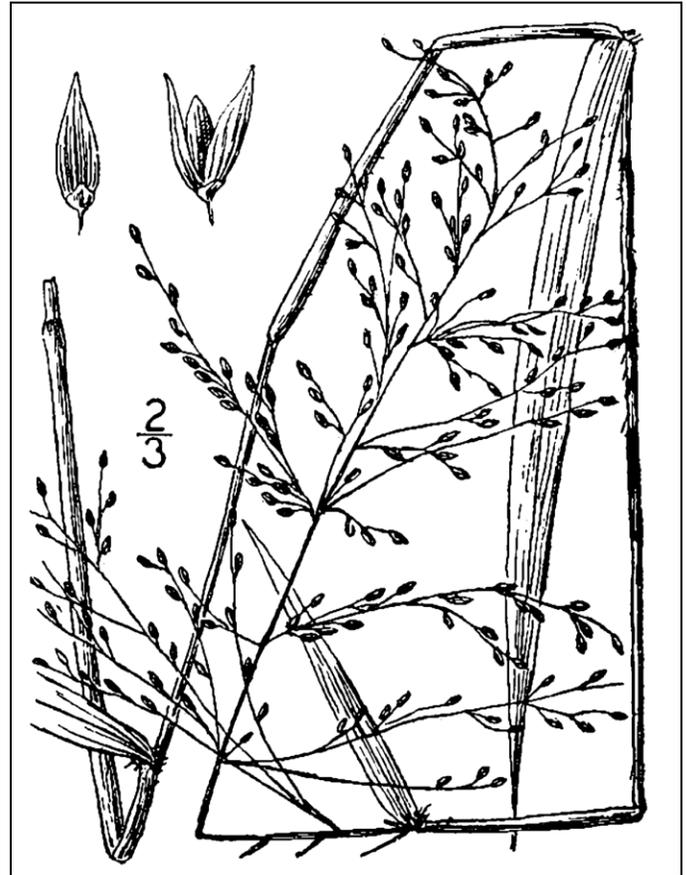
*Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

**Rough Panic-grass**  
***Dichanthelium scabriusculum***  
(Elliott) Gould & C.A. Clark

State Status: **Threatened**  
Federal Status: **None**

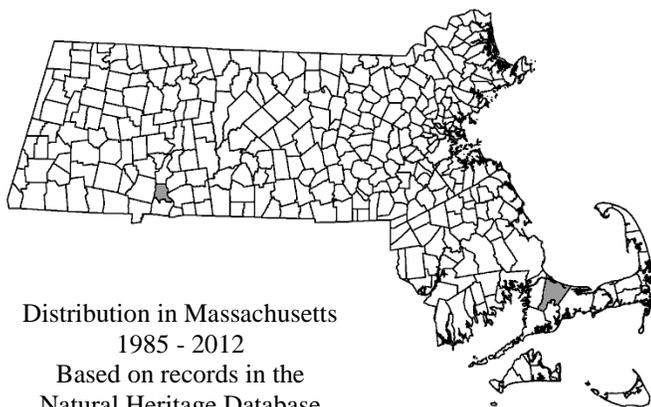
**DESCRIPTION:** Rough Panic-grass (*Dichanthelium scabriusculum*) is a tall (70–150 cm) perennial species in the Grass family (Poaceae). It grows in large clumps and becomes increasingly branched and bushy through the summer and early fall. Like other panic-grasses, this species has an open, branched inflorescence and each spikelet contains only a single floret (a small individual flower). In Rough Panic-grass, the inflorescence is 10 to 21 cm tall. In late summer and early fall, Rough Panic-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 Panic-grass looks generally similar to several other panic-grasses. In particular, Deer-tongue Grass (*Dichanthelium clandestinum*) is very common and easily mistaken for Rough Panic-grass. Rough Panic-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.



*Rough Panic-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.



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

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

1 Rabbit Hill Rd., Westborough, MA; tel: 508-389-6300; fax: 508-389-7890; [www.mass.gov/dfw](http://www.mass.gov/dfw)

Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for 'endangered wildlife conservation' on your state income tax form, as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

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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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Panic-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 Panic-grass in Massachusetts are from Hampden and Barnstable Counties.

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

**HABITAT:** Rough Panic-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 Panic-grass without damaging existing populations. Sites that support Rough Panic-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 2015

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