

Species Factsheet

the
species
recovery
trust

Lolium temulentum

Darnel



Red List Status:
Awaiting
assessment

Threat of extinction:
Very high

Main threats:
Modern
agricultural
practices, poor
seed dormancy.

Description: Culms tufted, solitary, ascending, erect, 60-100 cm. Leaves are lanceolate, simple with a shiny surface, leaf blades narrowly linear, acute at apex, with smooth or scabrid margins, somewhat rough above, 10-30 cm long, 3-10 mm wide, young leaves with involute margins, ligule 1-2 mm long. Inflorescence is a terminal spike, rigidly erect, 12-30 cm long with 6-30 spikelets, dorsally placed along a rachis with a zigzag shape. Spikelets 12-30 mm in length, usually with 4-10 flowers. Outer glume of the lateral spikelets usually 2.5 cm in length, as long as or longer than the entire spikelets, 7-9-nerved, thinly coriaceous with narrow membranous margins. Flowering glumes are shorter and broader, oblong, usually obtuse with an awn as long as or longer than the glume itself. The lemmas are up to 8 mm long, obtuse with awns 6-12 mm long. Palea two-keeled. Seeds elliptic-oblong in shape, grooved. Appears black when ripe.

Lifecycle: Hardy annual. Flowers June - August. Wind-pollinated.

Habitat: Arable. Most soil types in full sun.

Distribution: Global.

Status: Archaeophyte. Last recorded in UK in 2010. No known extant populations in the UK.

Reasons for decline: Introduction of efficient seed cleaning technology and herbicides. Poor seed dormancy.

Legal protection: Listed under the NERC Act 2006 as a Species of Principal Importance in England, and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) as a Priority Species.

What we are doing:

- Establishing a network of new 'safe sites' where Darnel is grown and increasing the amount of seed available to the Millennium Seed Bank, Kew.
- Planned reintroduction to more 'natural' habitats.

What you can do:

- Contact us if you see this plant growing in the wild, or if you are a landowner interested in growing this plant