



## Orchardgrass *In-brief*

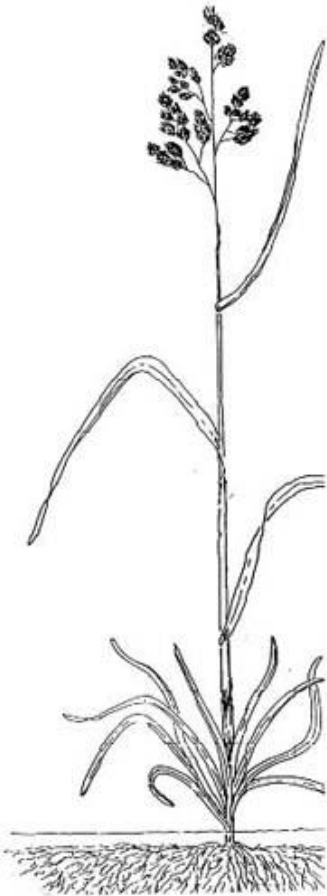
### Description and Adaptation of Orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*)

#### Plant Characteristics:

Orchardgrass is a long-lived perennial, a distinctly bunched type of grass with folded leaf blades and compressed sheaths. It is non-sod-forming without rhizomes. The flowering stems (culms) are smooth and from 2 to 4 feet high. The inflorescence is a thickly clustered panicle 3 to 6 inches long. Panicle branches have a few one sided dense clusters of green or purplish spikelets.

#### Adaptation:

Orchardgrass is shade tolerant is a vigorous, tall, rapid grower and is next to Kentucky bluegrass in being one of the earliest to start growth in the spring. It continues growth to quite severe frosts. It is more heat resistant and drought resistant than timothy or smooth brome grass and makes excellent regrowth in the summer period. It tolerates the 3-cut system used with intensive alfalfa production better than other grasses. Orchardgrass must be well managed to limit its competition with legumes and for acceptable feed value. Orchardgrass will not stand close continuous grazing and is best adapted to medium-textured well-drained soils.



For more information visit [www.umass.edu/cdl](http://www.umass.edu/cdl)

Factsheets in this series were prepared by Stephen Herbert, Masoud Hashemi, Carrie Chickering-Sears, and Sarah Weis in collaboration with Ken Miller, Jacqui Carlevale, Katie Campbell-Nelson, and Zack Zenk.

This publication has been funded in part by Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources in a grant to the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, Inc. and by Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, s319 Program.