



RANGE AND PASTURE GRASS IDENTIFICATION CONTEST 2026 4-H STATE ROUNDUP & DISTRICT ROUNDUP CONTESTS

RS 1

General Contest Rules - see 4-H Roundup Handbook

Which Grasses? The 75 grasses on Extension Publication RS1.044, Master Plant List (revised), will be used for the contest. The Master Plant List can be found on the State 4-H web site under materials for the Range Science Project. The grass name, correct spelling and characteristics associated with a grass used in this contest come only from the Master Plant List. Contest specimens consist of mounted grasses or live grasses. 4-H team members and youth involved in the 4-H Range Science Project generally study mounted grasses, but leaders and coaches are encouraged to conduct some training for youth outdoor on the range resource in a pasture, park or wildlife area, open space area and even vacant lots where different kinds and species of native plants can be found. Grasses on the contest can represent any season of the year, drought or above normal rainfall years, thus grass specimen may have inflorescence (flowers and seed-heads) or only vegetative characteristics such as leaves, sheaths, roots and/or old stems.

Are study mounts available? No, not at this time. The TAMU Range Club is no longer selling plant mounts for plants on the Master Plant List.

Where do contest mounts come from? District Roundup Contest and State 4-H Roundup grass he District Director, District 4-H Specialist or contest coordinator by the Extension Range Specialists. County and Open Grass Contests mounts are provided in the same manner. Live grasses (growing in a pot or plant laid on a table-top but must match the pre-prepared District Grass Contest grading keys) may be used on both District and State Roundup contests.

How are contestant scorecards judged? When cardstock paper score cards are used, the contestant's scorecard is compared to a master grading key for the individual contest. The scoring on Grass Identification Contests is based on a 10 points per grass including characteristics. Each characteristic is worth 1 point of the total 10. For example: Contestant A gets the name of the grass "vinemesquite" correct. When the characteristics are graded, the contestant missed the longevity for this grass calling it an annual when correctly it was a perennial. Contestant A's score for this grass would be a 9, where $10-1=9$. With 40 grasses on the District Roundup contests, the total value for the contest or maximum score is 400 points. At 4-H State Roundup in 2026, a scantron form will be used and 60 grasses will be on the contest with a total contest value of 600 points. For 2026, District Contests can be either hand writing on a score card or by use of a scantron sheet. For hand written score cards, the judges must be able to read the contestants answer or the contestants answer may get no credit. The scorecard or form used for Grass Contests is RS 1.043, Plant Identification Contest Score sheet, which are provided with the District Roundup Grass contest specimens. 4-H participants write the common grass name and mark characteristics (using an X in the appropriate box) using a pencil. Erasing is allowed as long as it is done legibly and neatly and judges can tell the intended answer. For scantron contests, participants

should be trained on proper bubbling in of answers.

Reference Materials (other than grass specimens or mounts): Five excellent study references are available. Know Your Grasses (Extension Publication B-182, for sale only), is available to all clientele and can be ordered through Extension at <http://AgriLifeLearnPubs@ag.tamu.edu>. Common Texas Grasses, by Frank W. Gould, and Texas Range Plants, by Stephan L. Hatch and Jennifer Pluhar, are available from the Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street, 4354 TAMUS, College Station, Texas 77843-4354 or by telephone at (800) 826-8911, or (979) 847-1436 or by fax at (979) 847-8752.

Websites

- Web Soil Survey <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>
- Plants of Texas Database <https://rangeplants.tamu.edu/>
- Texas Native Seed – Seed Selection Tool <https://www.ckwri.tamuk.edu/research-programs/texas-native-seeds-program/native-seed-selection-tool>

Contest Reminders for Roundup Contest Coordinator or Superintendent:

1. Contest coordinators provide the scorecards (RS1.043, 40 plants or 50 grass score card for Roundup) or a 40, 50 or 60 grass scantron used at the contest. For hand written score cards, each contestant shall write their name and county on the top of the scorecard unless this has been done by the contest superintendent ahead of time. When a scantron form is used, instructions for filling out the team and individual contestant name will be provided. Each team will be given a team number. Teams consist of 3 or 4 members within the appropriate age category being used in 2026. Team members should be identified as team member A, B, C and D. Thus the contestant number is a combined team number and team member letter, such as 3A, 14C or 27D in hand written contests. A senior team from a county has three team members. During registration they are noted to be team 11. The team members would then be 11A, 11B and 11C. Having contestant letters allows the coordinator to separate team members before entering the contest area by putting all A's, B's and so forth together.
2. Before the contest, the contest superintendent or coordinator should go over all of the rules which will be enforced during the contest session. Before entering the contest area, each contestant should have a legal size clipboard in hand written contests, score card (with the participants name, county and district on top of scorecard), two pencils and a magnifying glass with or without a light. In a scantron contest participants will be given a copy of the grass name converted to a 3 digit number for bubbling purposes. No other materials are allowed in the contest area. Contestants use clipboards so that they will not disturb the grass specimen on the table tops or write on the table tops. The score card for the grass contest is legal paper size and best fits a legal size clipboard. Scantron contest sheets are normal size of 8.5 by 11 sheets..
3. At District grass identification contests, the coordinator should have contestants line up by division (sub-junior, junior, and senior) and by contestant letter. For starting the contest, the contest coordinator brings the contestants into the contest area by walking them to the numbered grasses. Each contestant stands in front of a contest specimen and turns their back to the specimens until the contest begins. The contest official can ask each contestant to circle the

number or use a small check mark on the score sheet corresponding with the number on the grass specimen in front of the contestant. This helps new and younger 4-H members to not begin on grass one unless they are standing at grass one. This number is then indicated to all contestants as the line on the scorecard where they begin writing. This will aid new contestants to not write on line 1 unless they are in front of the grass specimen numbered 1.

4. The contest coordinator should arrange the grass specimen in a logical flow order or pattern with adequate space between specimens to separate contestants. This is most easily done with 40 to 60 grass specimens laid out in a circle using a minimum of six to nine 8-foot tables. The circle pattern allows the contestant on grass number 40 or 60 to easily step to grass number 1 next. Contestants rotate from specimen to specimen in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction pending on how the Superintendent lays out the contest..

5. Contestants write on the numbered line of the scorecard corresponding with the number on the contest grass specimen or bubble in answers on the scantron sheet based on the grass number that the contestant starts. Contestants should be reminded to write plainly and neatly. Characteristic boxes should be marked with an "X". Check marks and other symbols may often go outside of the designated box and cause a grader to mark the answer wrong. Bubbling in answers should be done neatly and within the area of the circle.

6. Contestants **do not** talk during the contest. Although team scores are determined for award purposes, the contest challenges the individual's knowledge. The contest is not a group/team effort. 4-H contestants see change in their knowledge gained through their score over time.

7. There will be 40 grasses on the District Roundup Contests and 60 grasses on the contest at 4-H State Roundup. If more than 40 contestants are present for the District Grass Contest, two contestants can be placed at each grass if room allows, or the contest can be run a second time using one contestant per grass mount. Contest coordinators can replace mounts with live specimens if they so desire and are certain of the correct name for the grass being used.

8. There may be duplicate or even triplicate grasses of the same name on the contests.

9. The contest coordinator should designate a volunteer or other staff member to be the time keeper. Contestants should not begin writing until the time keeper says "begin". Contestants will be given 45 seconds on hand written score cards for identification and marking of characteristics at each contest specimen. Thus the contest will take 30 minutes for a 40 grass contest. If a scantron form is used, the contestants get 1 minute at each specimen. An additional volunteer should be in the contest area with a handful of sharpened number 2 pencils to aid participants who break both the pencils they brought. Contestants are told to raise their hand if they need a pencil.

10. During the contest, contestants are **not allowed** to touch or handle the grass specimens.

11. Distinguishing characteristics will be present on each grass; look for them. Seed-heads, inflorescence, leaves or roots may not always be present. 4-H youth are asked to learn

secondary characteristics are well (bulb-based hair on leaves, rhizome present, etc.).

12. Contestants should be asked to stay beside the last grass identified until the time keeper or contest official announces that scorecards are to be turned in or taken up by contest officials. 4-H participants should be encouraged to fill in all plant names, guess if they have to, but not leave any line blank. Plant naming encourages critical and deductive thinking.

13. Grasses will be named at the end of the contest for future study. During this viewing time, participants and others are **not allowed** to handle the grass specimens but they can view the specimens for further study and a learning event. After the contest, name cards with the correct grass name can be placed over the number on each specimen. A second method is to have a half-sheet with the correct answers which can be handed out to grass contest participants, coaches, County Extension agents, parents and visitors to the contest area. Upcoming events can be printed on the back of the half-sheet for all to have and leave the District or State Contest with additional information in hand.

14. Grading (volunteers, coaches, etc.) is most easily done by laying the grading key to the right of the contestants grass names and grading the names first on a hand written score card. If a grass name is missed, a red line should be drawn through the whole line over to the score box on the right or the last double line on the scorecard. The grass name must be correct before the characteristics of that grass are scored. Then the grading key is placed on the left side of the contestant's scorecard and the characteristics are graded (those lines that do not have a red line through them). A correct score for each grass is entered into the score column on the right side of the score sheet. The contestants score is then determined by adding all of the points in the right-hand score column together. The score box for a grass that is missed (incorrect name) should be left blank since no points were received. Placing a zero (0) in the column is not necessary. Negative numbers should not be used. Red pencils can be used for the initial grading.

15. Judges or graders need to recheck each score sheet for accuracy before summarizing the results for the contest. The most common errors in grading are human errors, ie. a grass was correctly named but the judge failed to write the points in the right hand column. Having a different individual review the score sheet will help to eliminate these errors or problems with grading. Coaches and/or parents should not grade their team members or children's scorecards. Blue pencils can be used for marks in a second grading of each contestant's scorecard.

16. The delivery of awards to teams and individual winners is quite variable across the state. It is recommended that awards be given out in the order of sub-junior first, followed by junior and senior divisions. Individual awards should be given out first, recognizing the third high individual followed by the second high and the first place winner last. Team recognition should follow the same order. While most districts give awards to three places (both individual and team), some districts will give up to ten places, especially in the individual category.

The award ceremony is an honorable occasion to recognize 4-H youth who have pursued

excellence and achieved a certain level in their knowledge and skills. The Master of Ceremony for the awards session should begin the session by stating what 4-H youth are learning in the Range Science Project Area and how the grass contest supports the project goals and serves as a learning activity. The grass contest is not the goal of learning or the project (See project handout and overview for additional details and Extension Publication L-5364, Know Your Plants to Protect Your Watershed). This approach will give meaning to the time and effort of participants spent in this educational program conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The Master of Ceremony should recognize volunteer graders, honored guests and any outside support for the District/State contests.

Prepared by: Dr. Barron S. Rector, Associate Professor and Extension Range Specialist (January 2026)

Extension Publication RS1.044 Master Plant List

GRASSES

001 Alkali sacaton
002 Bahiagrass
003 Barnyardgrass
004 Beaked panicum
005 Bermudagrass
006 Big bluestem
007 Black grama
008 Blue grama
009 Broomsedge bluestem
010 Brownseed paspalum
011 Buffalograss
012 Buffelgrass
013 Burrograss
014 Bush muhly
015 California cottontop
016 Canada wildrye
017 Common carpetgrass
018 Common curlymesquite
019 Dallisgrass
020 Eastern gamagrass
021 Fall witchgrass
022 Florida paspalum
023 Green sprangletop
024 Gulf cordgrass
025 Hairawn muhly
026 Hairy grama
027 Hairy tridens
028 Hall panicum
029 Hooded windmillgrass
030 Inland saltgrass
031 Japanese brome
032 Johnsongrass
033 King Ranch bluestem
034 Kleingrass
035 Knotroot bristlegrass
036 Little barley
037 Little bluestem
038 Longspike tridens
039 Longton
040 Marshhay cordgrass
041 Meadow dropseed
042 Oldfield threeawn
043 Pink pappusgrass

044 Plains bristlegrass
045 Plains lovegrass
046 Purple threeawn
047 Purpletop
048 Rattail smutgrass
049 Red grama
050 Red lovegrass
051 Rescuegrass
052 Ryegrass
053 Sand dropseed
054 Sand lovegrass
055 Scribner dichanthelium
056 Sideoats grama
057 Silver bluestem
058 Switchgrass
059 Tall dropseed
060 Tall fescue
061 Tanglehead
062 Texas cupgrass
063 Texas grama
064 Texas wintergrass
065 Thin paspalum
066 Tobosa
067 Tumblegrass
068 Tumble windmillgrass
069 Vinemesquite
070 Virginia wildrye
071 Weeping lovegrass
072 Western wheatgrass
073 White tridens
074 Wright threeawn
075 Yellow Indiangrass

GRASS-LIKE

076 Cedar sedge
077 Cherokee sedge
FORBS
078 Bitter sneezeweed
079 Broadleaf milkweed
080 Broom snakeweed
081 Common broomweed
082 Engelmann daisy
083 Field bindweed
084 Maximilian sunflower
085 Mexican sagewort
086 Orange zexmenia

087 Prairie tea
088 Silverleaf nightshade
089 Slim aster
090 Texas croton
091 Threadleaf groundsel
092 Upright prairie-coneflower
093 Western bitterweed
094 Western ragweed
095 Yankeeweed

LEGUMES & RATANY (HERBACEOI

096 Alfalfa
097 Bur-clover
098 Crimson clover
099 Nuttall milkvetch
100 Singletary pea
101 Texas bluebonnet
102 Trailing ratany
103 White sweetclover
104 Woolly loco
105 Yellow neptunia

WOODY

106 Algerita
107 Ashe juniper
108 Blackbrush
109 Blackjack oak
110 Common buttonbush
111 Coyotillo
112 Flameleaf sumac
113 Guajillo
114 Gum bumelia
115 Honey mesquite
116 Huisache
117 Live oak
118 Loblolly pine
119 Lotebush
120 Netleaf hackberry
121 Post oak
122 Redberry juniper
123 Sand sage
124 Shortleaf pine
125 Skunkbush
126 Spiny hackberry
127 White brush
128 Willow baccharis
129 Yaupon

Plant ID No.	Plant Number			Longevity		Season of Growth			Origin		Economic Value							
	First Digit	Second Digit	Third Digit	Annual	Perennial	Cool	Warm	Both	Native	Intro-duced	Wildlife			Grazing			Poisonous	
											Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Yes	No
23	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
24	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
25	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
26	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
27	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
28	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
29	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
30	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
31	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
32	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
33	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
34	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
35	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
36	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
37	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
38	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
39	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
40	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
41	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
42	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
43	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
44	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
45	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
46	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
47	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
48	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
49	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
50	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
51	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
52	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
53	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
54	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
55	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
56	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
57	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
58	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
59	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N
60	0 1 2	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A	P	C	W	CW	N	I	G	F	P	G	F	P	Y	N