Identifying native perennial grasses

Native Wheatgrass
Elymus scalaris
Habitat: grows on most soil types, particularly in moist and well-drained areas of paddocks.
Growth Habit: a short, tufted grass to 50cm tall.
Seed Head: a wide open panicle with spikelets often paired at the end of branches.
Leaves: are flat and dull green–grey in colour, are round and have no awns.

Rough Speargrass
Austrostipa scabra
Habitat: widespread and common occurring on heavy, weedy soils, particularly black earth soils of the North East and North West regions, prefers good moisture, high fertility and neutral to alkaline pH.
Growth Habit: a slender, tufted grass to 90cm height, grows on poor, shallow soils.
Seed Head: consists of open, spreading branches (panicle) that is more than twice as long as broad; branches and spikelets branching approximately at right angles. Spikelets are often broad and ovate and have many divisions (bract-like appendages).
Leaves: leaf blades are rolled in the bud and smooth along the margins; leaf sheaths are hairy.

Plains Grass
Austrostipa australisgus
Habitat: common to dominant in native/naturalised pastures on heavy soils of the north coast; prefers good moisture, high fertility and neutral to alkaline pH.
Growth Habit: a slender, tufted grass to 90cm height, grows on poor, shallow soils.
Seed Head: consists of open, spreading branches (panicle) that is more than twice as long as broad; branches and spikelets branching approximately at right angles. Spikelets are often broad and ovate and have many divisions (bract-like appendages).
Leaves: leaf blades are rolled in the bud and smooth along the margins; leaf sheaths are hairy.

Wallaby Grass
Austrostipa sp.
Habitat: widespread and common occurring on heavy, weedy soils, particularly black earth soils of the North East and North West regions, prefers good moisture, high fertility and neutral to alkaline pH.
Growth Habit: a slender, tufted grass to 90cm height, grows on poor, shallow soils.
Seed Head: consists of open, spreading branches (panicle) that is more than twice as long as broad; branches and spikelets branching approximately at right angles. Spikelets are often broad and ovate and have many divisions (bract-like appendages).
Leaves: leaf blades are rolled in the bud and smooth along the margins; leaf sheaths are hairy.

Year-long green perennial

Kangaroo Grass
Themeda australis
Habitat: found in woodlands, native pastures and native vegetation. Widely distributed in low to moderate fertility habitats.
Growth Habit: a dense, tussock forming grass to 90cm height. The inflorescence is a wide open panicle with spikelets often paired at the end of branches.
Leaves: are flat and dull green–grey in colour, are round and have no awns.

Year-long green annual

Warrego Summer Grass
Paspalum jodiforme
Habitat: common in paddock depressions, swamps; most productive on heavy, fertile soils, responds well to flooding and inundation.
Growth Habit: a leafy and slender Panicoid grass with erect stems growing from 30–120cm in height; dense leafy tuft.
Seed Head: a domed panicle with spikelets often paired at the end of branches.
Leaves: have a distinct blue–green; older leaves become curled, crinkled or spiralled.

Common Windmill Grass
Chloris truncata
Habitat: widespread on many soil types; useful coloniser of bare areas following summer rain; readily self-sown.
Growth Habit: tufted grass, usually less than 200cm height, consists of stolons (runners) that can root down at the node.
Seed Head: windmill-like (digitate) seed head consists of 6–9 spikes that radiate out like spokes of a wheel from main stem; terminal spikelets are arranged in two rows on the underside of branches; black seeds are blunt andawned.
Leaves: have a distinct blue–green; older leaves become curled, crinkled or spiralled.

Hairy Panic
Panicum effusum
Habitat: most common in dry areas on sand or shallow or heavy soils; found in low to moderate abundance in native pastures, woodland or disturbed areas.
Growth Habit: a tufted grass to 1.2m tall, growing from 30-120cm in height, with few, coarse, narrow and often a distinct blue–green; older leaves become curled, crinkled or spiralled.

Cool season perennial

Snow or Tussock Grass
Poa sieberiana
Habitat: a widespread species often found in woodland and forest environments; more common on well drained upper slopes than lower drainage lines.
Growth Habit: a densely tufted grass to 80cm height.
Seed Head: pyramidal – shaped and open, varying from green to purple in colour.
Leaves: green to grey-green, long and fine, rough to touch and without a ligule.

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