

GRASS FAMILY ALBUM

GRAMINEAE OR POACEAE

The World's Breadbasket

While not the largest in terms of species, for humans the grass family is undoubtedly the most important. From the contents of our morning cereal bowl and the biofuels in our cars, to an afternoon of golf, few of us will pass a single day without eating or using grass products. As a group, grasses both wild and cultivated constitute the largest amount of earth's biomass and supply the majority of calories to consumers. Grasses also feed our need for beauty with their graceful forms that sway in the wind.

The lack of showy flowers in grasses belies their amazing diversity and complexity. Grasses are pollinated by wind, and their individual flowers are generally quite small and highly modified—the familiar showy petals and sepals are noticeably absent. Instead, the grasses invest energy in producing huge amounts of airborne pollen, much to the misery of allergy sufferers each year.



Robert Soreng @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS



Robert Soreng @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS



Robert Soreng



Robert Soreng @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS