

Festuca octoflora Walter, SIXWEEKS GRASS, SIXWEEKS FESCUE. Annual, fibrous-rooted, several-many-stemmed at base, cespitose, in range 7–30 cm tall; shoots with slender basal leaves and lower cauline leaves often inrolled, glabrous (pubescent). **Stems (culms):** cylindric, < 1 mm diameter, tough. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule truncate, 0.3–1 mm long, minutely jagged; blade linear, to 100 × 0.5–1 mm but becoming inrolled so appearing narrower and cylindric, parallel-veined. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicles, panicle 40–160 mm long, often dense with overlapping spikelets appressed on closely spaced lateral branches, 1 branch per node, spikelet with (5–)7–12 florets, bracteate, short-hairy (hirtellous), awned. **Spikelet:** with florets conspicuously alternate distichous (imbricate), oblong compressed side-to-side, mostly 5.5–10 mm long (excluding awns), breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, unequal, linear-lanceolate, lower glume ± 2–4.5 mm and 1-veined or 3-veined, upper glume ± 2.5–7 mm and 3-veined; rachilla minutely scabrous, segments 0.5–0.7 mm long; **lemma** awned, lanceolate, ± 3–5 mm long, 3-veined but only midvein to tip, rounded on back, scabrous, inrolled, the awn straight, 0.5–6.5 mm long, the longest on the lowest floret; palea membranous, slightly < lemma, 2-veined, acute to 2-toothed at tip, the teeth < 0.2 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2; **stamens** 1(3); **pistil** 1; ovary superior, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis) 1.7–3.3 mm long.

Native. Annual rarely reported in range. *Festuca octoflora* is often treated as a species of *Vulpia* with three varieties, but the varieties are not well-defined and likely should not be used in California. If recognized, our local form corresponds to *V. octoflora* var. *hirtella* (Piper) Henrard, which is predominant in western North America and has scabrous lemmas.

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