

Eaton's Panic Grass

Dichanthelium spretum

NS General Status Rank: Secure

GRASS-LIKE : GRAMINOIDS



Eaton's Panic Grass with panicles that have dropped their spikelets © ALAIN BELLIVEAU
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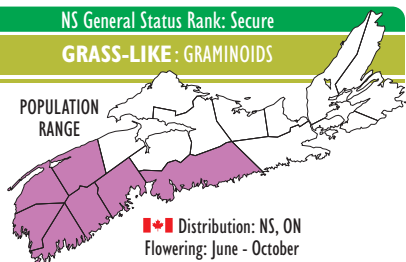
Upward pointing leaves and smaller leaves



Late summer panicle in the leaf axil © MEGAN CROWLEY



Panicle after the fruit has fallen off



SIZE: 30-80 cm tall.

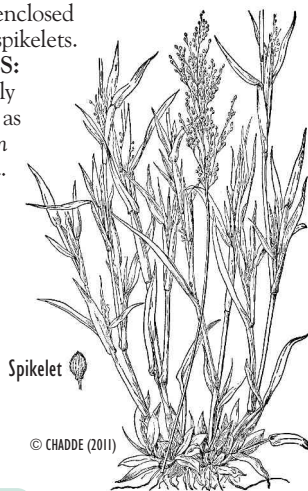
LEAVES: Close to the stem and pointing upwards (ascending), 6-10 cm long and 3-6 mm wide. Several smaller leaves are often found on the lower stem and on branches off the main stem, particularly in late summer and fall.

STEM: Smooth and sometimes branched near the base in late season.

FLOWERS: Pyramid-shaped branched cluster of flowers (panicle) that is 3-10 cm long and very narrow (3-4 times longer than wide). It is composed of many small spikelets (1-1.8 mm long) with fine hairs. In late summer and fall, several smaller panicles are formed along the lower stem where the leaves meet the stem (leaf axils).

FRUITS: Small dry grains enclosed in the spikelets.

NOTES: Formerly known as *Panicum spretum*.



Habitat:

Rock, boulder, sand, gravel or peaty lakeshores.

Similar species: Old Switch Panic Grass (*Panicum virgatum* var. *spissum*, page 79) and Spreading Panic Grass (*Panicum dichotomiflorum* var. *puritanorum*, page 77) have much larger panicles. Redtop Panic Grass (*Panicum rigidulum* var. *pubescens*, page 78) has a flattened stem at the base.

Interesting point: The name *Panicum* comes from the latin name for millet. The species Millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) also grows in Nova Scotia. Millet is an edible grain used in breads, cereals and other dishes. It is also in bird food mixes.