

Avena fatua

[Synonyms : *Avena fatua* var. *glabrata*, *Avena fatua* var. *intermedia*, *Avena fatua* subsp. *meridionalis*, *Avena fatua* var. *vilis*, *Avena hybrida*, *Avena intermedia*, *Avena lanuginosa*, *Avena meridionalis*, *Avena nigra*, *Avena patens*, *Avena pilosa*, *Avena sativa* var. *fatua*, *Avena sativa* var. *sericea*, *Avena sterilis* subsp. *fatua*, *Avena septentrionalis*]

WILD OAT is an annual grass. Native to Europe it has heads of stiffly hairy, drooping yellow flower spikelets.

It is also known as *Agriovromi* (Greek), Animated oat, *Avena loca* (Spanish), *Avena selvatica* (Italian), *Avena silvestre* (Spanish), *Aveno kampa* (Esperanto), *Avenon* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Avoine folle* (French), *Avoine sauvage* (French), *Ceirchwellt Gwyllt y Gwanwyn* (Welsh), *Chahiki gusa* (Japanese), Common wild oat, Flaver, *Floghavre* (Norwegian), *Flughafer* (German), *Flyghavre* (Swedish), *Flyvehavre* (Danish), *Folle avoine* (French), *Gewone Wildehawer* (Afrikaans), *Harfur* (Maltese), *Hukkakaura* (Finnish), *Karasu mugi* (Japanese), *Khâfûr* (Arabic), *Oot* (Dutch), *Oves dikij* (Russian), *Oves hluchý* (Czech), *Oves pustoj* (Russian), *Ovos hluchý* (Slovak), *Ovsaha* (Czech), *Ovsjug* (Russian), *Ovsjug obyknovennyi* (Russian), *Owies gluchy* (Polish), Pillcorn, Potato oat, *Shûfân* (Arabic), Spring oat, Spring wild oat, *Vildhavre* (Swedish), *Vromi i astatos* (Greek), *Windhafer* (German), *Yabani yulaf* (Turkish), *Ye yan mai* (Chinese), and *Zummayr* (Arabic).

As the stiffly hairy yellow to black seeds (grain) reach maturity they shatter and fall, beginning from the top of the pyramidal heads and working down to their bases. It often grows among cultivated crops and it may be one of the parents of oat (*Avena sativa*).

Wild oat grain can be distinguished from cultivated varieties by the presence of a scar (which is absent on the cultivated oat, *Avena sativa*).

Fatua means according to authorities ‘insipid or not good’ (although the actual meaning is ‘simple or foolish’).

The ground seeds (pre-singed to remove the hairs) provided food (in the form of a porridge-like mush or used as flour) for the Kawaiisu, Luiseño, Cahuilla, Pomo, Mendocino Indian and Diegueño North American Indian tribes. The Pomo tribe also stored the seeds for Winter use.

Wild oat is popular with flower arrangers who dry it and sometimes dye it in different colours. The grass is also cultivated in gardens as an ornamental plant, especially in urban areas.