



**X7.8**

# AIRA CUPANIANA

## Silvery Hairgrass

A slender annual, 3–40 cm high. *Culms* few to many, in tufts, or solitary, erect or spreading, very slender. *Nodes* 2–3, hairless. *Leaves* greyish-green, mostly basal. *Leaf sheaths* smooth or slightly rough upwards. *Ligule* up to 5 cm long, membranous, toothed. *Leaf blades* very fine, blunt, 0.5–5 cm long (occasionally up to 8 cm), the margins inrolled, about 0.3 mm wide, minutely rough on the nerves.

*Inflorescence* a delicate rather open panicle, 1–12 cm long and wide, the main axis often wavy, the primary and secondary branches widely spreading, very fine. *Spikelets* (S) 2 mm long, on pedicels 1–4 mm long, in loose clusters at the end of the branches, at maturity breaking up above the more or less persistent glumes. *Florets* 2, both similar and bisexual, except the lower floret not awned like the upper. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) similar, thinly membranous, 1–3-nerved, pointed, minutely rough on the keel. *Lemmas* (L<sub>1</sub>, L<sub>2</sub>) shorter than and enclosed by the glumes, nerveless or partly 1-nerved, slightly rough on the margins and back in the upper half with a tuft of short hairs at the base; L<sub>1</sub> entire, awnless; L<sub>2</sub> finely 2-toothed at the apex, awned from the back about 1/3 of the way up from the base with the short mid-nerve produced into the fairly long awn, which is kneed at a point about level with tip of the floret. *Paleas* (P) about 3/4 the length of the lemma, faintly 2-nerved, 2-keeled and slightly 2-pointed. *Anthers* 3, 0.3–0.6 mm long.

This winter-growing grass, a native of southern Europe, is to be found on the Darling Downs and border highlands of southeast Queensland. It is not generally common, though it may be locally so. It is of no significant forage value.

### REFERENCES

Gardner (1952),<sup>1</sup> p. 39; Burbidge and Gray (1970),<sup>2</sup> pp. 34–36; Willis (1970),<sup>3</sup> pp. 131–32; Beadle *et al.* (1972),<sup>4</sup> pp. 647–48.

### KEY TO SPECIES

Spikelets 2.5–3.2 mm long; florets from 3/4 to equalling glumes.  
Rare (silvery hair grass)

*A. caryophyllea*<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Spikelets 2–2.5 mm long; florets up to 3/4 length of glumes. Un-  
common (silvery hair grass)

*A. cupaniana*<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>  
(*multiculmis*)