



ALOPECURUS GENICULATUS

Marsh Foxtail

A slender, tufted annual or perennial, often growing at the water's edge and floating on it, or growing in damp places, sparsely leaved and stemmy, 10–50 cm tall. *Culms* strongly kneeed at the base or sometimes erect, slender. *Nodes* hairless, constricted, the internodes usually exceeding the leaf sheaths. *Leaves* rather sparse, basal and on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* loose, smooth, hairless, striate. *Ligule* a transparent membranous flap 4–5 mm long, brownish at the base and tapering to a blunt point. *Leaf blades* fairly short and slender, up to 10 cm long and 2–4 mm wide, smooth, hairless.

Inflorescence a dense, spike-like panicle, up to 4 cm long and uniformly 5 mm wide, rounded at the tip, the numerous, severely contracted panicle branches bearing shortly pedicelled spikelets. *Spikelets* (S) about 2.5 mm long, borne singly and all similar, at maturity falling entire from the pedicels. *Floret* 1, bisexual. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) similar, membranous, prominently 3-nerved, rounded at the tip, rather narrow, the length of the spikelet, the nerves fringed on the back with long, silky hairs, the margins usually joined near the base, otherwise free. *Lemma* (L) much broader than the glumes and enclosing the flower, membranous, 5-nerved, hairless, awned from near the base, the awn forming a continuation of the central nerve and kneeed at a point about level with the tip of the lemma, otherwise straight, about twice the length of the lemma. *Palea* absent. *Anthers* 3, 0.6 mm long.

The grass is not common in southeast Queensland, but is encountered as a winter-growing species in wet or moist places on the southern Darling Downs and border range area. It is a weedy grass of no value as a fodder species.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ p. 1878; Willis (1970),² pp. 150–52; Beadle *et al.* (1972),³ p. 656; Black (1978),⁴ pp. 173–74; Jessop (1981),⁵ p. 435.

KEY TO SPECIES

Spikelets 4–6 mm long; margins of glumes united up to ½ their length (slender foxtail)

A. myosuroides^{2,4}

Spikelets 2–3 mm long; margins of glumes united only near the base (marsh foxtail)

A. geniculatus^{1,2,3,4,5}