



X3.7

ANDROPOGON VIRGINICUS

Whisky grass or Broomsedge

An erect, tufted perennial up to 1 m tall, the tufts developing into clumps. *Culms* erect, strongly compressed at the base, with many persistent, keeled leaf sheaths overlapping, branching freely at the nodes. *Nodes* hairless, often purplish-coloured. *Leaves* basal and on the culms, green or blue-green, turning purplish-red. *Leaf sheaths* fairly loose, smooth, hairless, strongly keeled and overlapping, straw-coloured and persistent, often shorter than the internodes. *Ligule* a rim of dense, short and sparser longer hairs. *Leaf blades* folded at the base (especially the basal ones) and tapering gradually to a point, 3–4 mm wide and up to 40cm long, the leaf margins and surface with some long, white, tubercle-based hairs near the base, otherwise hairless and smooth.

Inflorescence a narrow, spatheate, racemose panicle, spathes inflated, more or less enclosing 2–4 racemes until maturity, spathes often becoming bronze-coloured. *Spikelets* (S) sessile, 3 mm long, excluding the awn, accompanied by a pedicel, the pedicellate spikelet absent or rudimentary, falling at maturity, together with the pedicel and rhachis joint; the pedicel and rhachis joint densely clothed in long, silky-white hairs. *Florets* 2, the lower sterile, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) the length of the spikelet, dissimilar; the lower glume (G₁) firm, 2-nerved (the mid-nerve faint or wanting), 2-keeled, flat between the keels, rough along the upper half of the keels, the tip slightly keeled. *Lemmas* (L₁, L₂) slightly shorter than the glumes, dissimilar; L₁ delicately membranous, nerveless; L₂ strongly 1-nerved, otherwise membranous, slightly bifid at the tip, the nerve produced into a long, straight, slightly rough awn. *Palea* (P₂) very reduced, 0.5 mm long, membranous and nerveless. *Anthers* 3, 1 mm long.

This naturalized grass is not common, but may be encountered widely, especially on sandy soils near the coast or in creek-beds.

REFERENCES

Hitchcock (1950), pp. 763-65; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 676.

KEY TO SPECIES

This is the only species occurring in Australia.