



ARRHENATHERUM ELATIUS
var. *BULBOSUM*

Bulbous Oatgrass *or* Onion Twitch

A loosely tufted perennial up to 1 m tall. *Culms* erect to slightly spreading, arising from a bulbous, rhizomatous base, moderately stout, smooth and hairless. *Nodes* 3–5, dark-pigmented, smooth or slightly hairy. *Leaves* green, basal and on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* rounded on the back, smooth, usually hairless, loose, more or less the length of the internodes. *Ligule* membranous, 1–3 mm long. *Leaf blades* flat, slightly rough, sparsely hairy, 2–6 mm wide, 8–40 cm long, tapering from near the base to a fine point.

Inflorescence a narrow panicle 10–40 cm long, green to greenish-purple, the branches clustered along the axis, simply or secondarily branched. *Spikelets* (S) borne singly on the branches, finely pedicellate, all alike, 7–10 mm long, breaking up at maturity above the persistent glumes. *Florets* 2, rarely 3, the lower (or lowest) male and awned, the upper bisexual, sometimes awned, sometimes with a short bristle or unawned, the 2 (or 3) falling together at maturity. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) slightly unequal, membranous, finely pointed; the lower glume (G_1) $\frac{2}{3}$ the spikelet length, 1-nerved; the upper (G_2) almost equal to the spikelet length, 3-nerved. *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) slightly exceeding G_2 , similar, except that of the lower male floret (L_1) awned from near the base of the back with a bent and twisted brown awn, 7-nerved, slightly notched at the tip. less membranous than the glumes, rounded on the back. *Paleas* (P_1 , P_2) similar in all florets, $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the lemma, 2-nerved and 2-keeled near the margin, scabrid along the back of the keels, otherwise membranous. *Anthers* 3, 4–5 mm long.

A relatively uncommon introduced temperate grass, restricted to the temperate parts of the south-eastern region. The onion-like bulbs cause the grass to be a troublesome weed in some situations. A variegated form is occasionally cultivated for decorative purposes.

REFERENCES

Gardner (1952), p. 39; Burbidge and Gray (1970), p. 36; Willis (1970), p. 127; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 648; Black (1978), p. 164.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only this species variety occurs in Queensland.