



ARTHRAOXON HISPIDUS

A slender, more or less tufted annual, up to 75 cm high, creeping to erect or semi-erect. *Culms* erect, slender, mostly purple in colour, smooth and hairless, frequently branched at the nodes and rooted from the lower ones. *Nodes* usually purple, smooth, often enclosed by the somewhat swollen bases of the leaf sheaths, particularly in the lower part of the culms. *Leaves* mostly on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* loose, densely covered with erect, stiff hairs, purple or straw-coloured. *Ligule* short and membranous with a torn or slightly hairy margin. *Leaf blades* short (3–4 cm long), broad (4–12 mm), markedly contracted at the base so as to clasp the culm at the ligule, elliptical in shape, coming to a point from near the base. *Leaf blades* in the lower part of the culm generally smaller than those higher up (often less than $\frac{1}{3}$ the size), often purplish, particularly towards the margins and tip, a few long hairs along the margin of the lower half. A robust green form of the grass also exists, the creeping stems and lower culms being quite stout, the leaf sheaths densely covered with long, erect, stiff hairs, and leaf blades longer and broader.

Inflorescence a series of 2–5 subdigitate spikes, purple in colour, the spikelets borne singly and sessile alternately on either side of the stepped axis; a short pedicel at the side of the sessile spikelets is the reduced remnant of a pedicellate spikelet; the axis breaking up at maturity into its separate joints and falling with the spikelets. *Spikelets* (S) 4 mm long (excluding the awn), asymmetrically shaped, being rounded on one side and flat on the other. *Florets* 2, dissimilar, the lower sterile and reduced to a lemma, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) equal, the length of the spikelet, purple in colour; the lower glume (G_1) with many indistinct nerves, rounded on the back, the entire back covered with spines; the upper (G_2) terminating in a sharp tip, indistinctly nerved, curved on the back, forming a blunt keel, which is rough down its back. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower sterile floret membranous, $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the glumes, nerveless. *Palea* absent. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper fertile floret membranous, slightly bilobed, with a long awn up to 9 mm in length arising from the back near the base, at first yellowish-brown, later black, twisted and kneed, hygroscopically active. *Palea*, if present, small and finely membranous. *Anthers* 2, 1 mm long. A short pedicel at the side of the spikelet is the rudimentary pedicellate spikelet.

This rather rare grass is found scattered in parts of eastern Queensland and northern New South Wales, where it may be found growing on the fringe of rainforest or in more open, wet eucalyptus forest.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1856; Vickery (1961), p. 28.

KEY TO SPECIES

One species only in Queensland.