



BOTHRIOCHLOA DECIPIENS

Pitted Bluegrass

A tufted perennial grass, 30–150 cm tall, often stooling at the base. *Culms* erect or nearly so, straw-coloured or purplish, particularly approaching the nodes, smooth, without hairs, often branched at the nodes. *Nodes* prominent, usually purple, hairless. *Leaves* mostly basal. *Leaf sheaths* mostly shorter than the internodes, rather loose, striate, slightly keeled, smooth and hairless. *Ligule* a rim of short hairs with tufts of long hairs laterally. *Leaf blades* 6–25 cm long, 2–5 mm wide, tapering to a point, slightly rough, hairless.

Inflorescence 3–5 subdigitate, erect racemes, 4–7 cm long, the axils bearded. *Spikelets* (S_1 , S_2) in pairs, one sessile, the other pedicellate, the joints and pedicels slender, 2.5–3.5 mm long, densely hairy, at maturity disarticulating below the glumes, the whole raceme breaking up into separate joints and pedicels. *Florets* 2 in the sessile spikelet, the lower floret sterile and reduced only to a lemma, the upper bisexual; none in the pedicellate spikelet, which is reduced to a lower glume only. *Sessile spikelet* (S_1) 5 mm long, fertile. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) similar in size and shape, as long as the spikelet; the lower glume (G_1) 7–9-nerved, pointed at the tip or sometimes 2-toothed, hairs on the back in the lower half, a distinct pit $\frac{2}{3}$ the way up the back; the upper (G_2) 3-nerved, the lateral nerves almost marginal. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower sterile floret membranous, without nerves, a fringe of short hairs around the upper margin. *Palea* absent. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper fertile floret very narrow, 1-nerved, produced into a twisted, hygroscopically active awn, 1.5–2.5 cm long. *Palea* absent. *Anther* 1, 1.5 mm long. *Pedicellate spikelet* (S_2) neuter, reduced to the lower glume (G_1) only, 3–3.5 mm long, without hairs, 7–9-nerved.

This is a widespread grass, particularly of the open forest country. It is not very palatable to stock, produces a small quantity of herbage, mainly at its base, and flowers freely after good rainfall. It can become locally dominant in areas where the preferred species are allowed to be grazed out.

REFERENCES and KEY TO SPECIES

See page 129, under *Bothriochloa bladhii*.