



X4.2

CAPILLIPEDIUM SPICEGERUM

Scented Top

A stout perennial. *Culms* up to 1–1.5 m tall, erect or slightly drooping at the head, mostly smooth and hairless, unbranched. *Nodes* smooth, often bearded with a rim of short hairs, reddish. *Leaves* almost entirely on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* usually silky-hairy, particularly towards the base of the plant, where they are quite persistent. *Ligule* usually densely hairy with tufts of long hairs at the margins. *Leaf blades* up to 40 cm long, 5–8 mm wide, tapering gradually to a point, flat, usually with the margins rolled outwards and slightly downwardly rough, the mid-rib prominent, colourless.

Inflorescence an open panicle, oval in outline, purple in colour, the individual short racemes borne on slender secondary branches, the primary branches opposite below and alternating above up the main axis, the axils minutely hairy; the racemes composed of 3–8 spikelet pairs. *Spikelets* (S_1 , S_2) in pairs, unequal, one sessile, the other pedicellate (except the terminal set, which has 2 pedicellate), the whole breaking up at maturity. *Florets* 2 in the sessile spikelet, the lower reduced to a sterile lemma, the upper bisexual; floret 1 in the pedicellate spikelet. *Sessile spikelet* (S_1) with 2 florets, the lower reduced to a lemma, the upper fertile, narrow and pointed, the callus at the base shortly bearded. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) unequal, the lower glume (G_1) more or less membranous, bluntly pointed, slightly depressed along the middle, 8–9-nerved, more or less hairy on the back and along the upper margin, the upper (G_2) 5-nerved, scabrous on the back of the nerves and distinctly furrowed between nerves. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower sterile floret membranous, without nerves. *Palea* absent. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper fertile floret reduced to a narrow, strap-like base to the long scabrid awn, into which it is produced, the awn twisted and hygroscopically active. *Palea* absent. *Pedicellate spikelet* (S_2) shorter and narrower than the sessile spikelet, male or neuter, usually flattened. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) slightly dissimilar, the lower glume (G_1) more or less acute, 5–7-nerved, rough along the keels and margin, slightly hairy along the margin and on the back, the margins folded in to enclose partly the upper glume; the upper (G_2) shorter, 1–3-nerved, also folded in on the margin to partly enclose the lemma, the margin slightly hairy. *Lemma* (L) up to 3 mm long, the tip rounded or absent. *Palea* absent. *Anthers*, where present, 3, less than 1 mm long.

This grass is widespread in forest country in eastern Queensland. It is readily eaten by stock and responds well to good soil fertility. When crushed, the inflorescence gives off an aromatic odour, which is the basis for its common name. It is a more robust grass than *C. parviflorum*, with which it is often associated.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1867 (as *Chrysopogon parviflorus* var. *spicigerus*); Blake (1944b),² pp. 41–46; Vickery (1961),³ pp. 37–39; Beadle *et al.* (1972),⁴ p. 675.

KEY TO SPECIES

Racemes with few spikelets (1 or 2 joints) (scented top)
Racemes with numerous spikelets (4–8 joints) (scented top)

C. parviflorum^{1,2,3,4}
C. spicigerum^{1,2,3,4}