



CHIONACHNE CYATHOPODA

River Grass

A tufted, reed-like perennial, up to 3 m tall. *Culms* erect, arising from a strong, scaly rhizome, simple or sparingly branched from the upper nodes, hairless, the upper internodes concave on one side. *Nodes* hairless or slightly hairy. *Leaves* mostly on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* mostly shorter than the internodes, rather loose towards the base, slightly keeled, hairless, except the basal ones, with few to many tubercle-based hairs arranged between the striations. *Ligule* 1–1.5 mm, membranous and slightly hairy. *Leaf blades* long, 1–3 cm broad, with a prominent, translucent mid-rib and margins, the margins very rough with bristles.

Inflorescence a simple raceme, to 12 cm long, at first enclosed by a spathe, but exerted at maturity, at first green but becoming straw-coloured at maturity, the sexes separate on the raceme. *Spikelets* (S_1 , S_2) of 2 types according to sex, the male spikelets numerous towards the tip, loosely overlapping, in pairs, on one side of the axis, similar, sessile or on a short pedicel; the female spikelets few to several towards the base, more closely overlapping, at maturity the spikelets falling entire attached to the fractured axis segments. *Florets* 2 in both spikelets; in the male spikelets, both florets are male; in the female spikelets, the lower floret is reduced to a lemma only, the upper floret female. *Male spikelets* (S_1) 1.2 cm long. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) equal in size and shape, 8–12 nerved; the lower glume (G_1) with a marginal flap along one side. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower floret slightly shorter, membranous, faintly 2-nerved. *Palea* (P_1) also membranous, about the same length, faintly 2-nerved. *Anthers* 3, 2.5 mm long. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper floret slightly longer than L_1 , nerveless, membranous. *Palea* (P_2) about the same length, faintly 2-keeled, membranous. *Anthers* 3, 5 mm long. *Female spikelets* (S_2) solitary, 1.5 cm long, sessile, tightly fitting the concavities in the axis and almost clasping it. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) very dissimilar; the lower glume (G_1) broad and very rounded, almost enclosing the spikelet by clasping wings, coming to a blunt tip, tough, with many nerves; the upper (G_2) smaller, more or less flat, pointed, with many nerves, not tough. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower sterile floret membranous, 3-nerved, bluntly pointed. *Palea* absent. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper fertile floret slightly shorter but similar, faintly 1-nerved. *Palea* (P_2) narrow, faintly 2-nerved, membranous.

The grass is not common, but occasionally may be found on the silty banks of streams. It is eaten to some extent by stock, even though coarse in nature.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ p. 1849 (as *Polytoca cyathopoda*); Gardner (1952),² p. 356.

KEY TO SPECIES

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| Tall, reedlike perennial up to 3 m tall. Male spikelets 12–13 mm long (river grass) | <i>C. cyathopoda</i> ^{1,2} |
| Short, leafy annual up to 60 cm tall. Male spikelets 7 mm long (river grass) | <i>C. hubbardiana</i> ² |