



COELORACHIS ROTTBOELLIoidES

Northern Canegrass

A tall, erect grass up to 3 m high. *Culms* stout, cane-like, smooth, arising from short, scaly rhizomes, branching from the nodes, particularly in the upper parts. *Nodes* distinct, hairless. *Leaves* on the culms, hairless, green to olive-green. *Leaf sheaths* smooth, striate, rather loose, mostly shorter than the internodes, slightly enlarged at the base. *Ligule* a rim of 1 mm long white hairs, tufted at the lateral margins. *Leaf blades* more or less flat, hairless, long, up to 1 cm broad, slightly rough down the margins, somewhat constricted basally at the ligule.

Inflorescence a large leafy panicle of slender, 5–10 cm long, cylindrical racemes, the peduncles of which are slender and crowded at one to several nodes, at first more or less contained by the loose, expanded sheath of a subtending leaf, later becoming largely exerted. *Spikelets* (S_1 , S_2) slightly subequal, in pairs in alternate notches of the rhachis, which disarticulates at maturity at the joints, together with the spikelets; the lower fertile spikelet (S_1) more or less embedded in the rhachis; the upper (S_2) pedicellate, male, sometimes slightly standing out from the axis. *Florets* 2 in each spikelet, the lower sterile, the upper bisexual in S_1 or male in S_2 . *Sessile spikelet* (S_1) 3–4 mm long. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) very dissimilar, slightly subequal, closely fitting marginally; rigid and tough; the lower glume (G_1) the length of the spikelet, 7-nerved, keeled along the lateral nerves and extending into membranous wings in the upper half, flat between the keels on the back; the upper (G_2) smooth, shining, faintly 3-nerved, pointed, strongly keeled along the mid-nerve, the tip boat-shaped and margins slightly inrolled. *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) delicately membranous, about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of G_1 , nerveless, dissimilar; L_1 flat on the back with the margins infolding; L_2 keeled on the midline, especially towards the pointed tip. *Palea* (P_2) membranous, nerveless, about the length of L_2 , blunt at the tip, infolded along the margins; P_1 absent. *Anthers* 3, 2 mm long, reddish-purple. *Pedicellate spikelet* (S_2) slightly shorter. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) very dissimilar, equal in length to S_2 , tough and rigid; the lower glume (G_1) 5-nerved, otherwise similar to G_1 of S_1 ; the upper (G_2) 1- or faintly 3-nerved, similar to G_2 of S_1 . *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) delicately membranous, nerveless, slightly subequal, about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of G_1 , slightly narrower than in S_1 . *Palea* (P_2) blunt, slightly shorter than L_2 , nerveless; P_1 absent. *Anthers* 3, 2 mm long, reddish-purple.

The grass is widely encountered, though usually only locally common, in grassland or open forests of the wetter tropical coastal lands.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), pp. 1858-59 (as *Rottboellia ophiuroides*); Gardner (1952), pp. 304-5.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in Australia.