



DANTHONIA LONGIFOLIA

Long-leaved Wallaby Grass

A tufted perennial of moderately short stature, up to 75 cm tall with very slender, weeping leaves, becoming very curled at maturity. *Culms* erect and slender, smooth and hairless, unbranched. *Nodes* conspicuous, 5 to many, without hairs. *Leaves* mainly basal. *Leaf sheaths* tightly fitting, though the basal ones tend to be loose, smooth and hairless, striate, particularly the basal ones. *Ligule* a rim of short hairs with a few longer ones on the margin (these are much reduced compared with most species of the genus). *Leaf blades* very narrow, 1–2 mm broad at the base but becoming inrolled, flexuous, up to 35 cm long, smooth and without hairs.

Inflorescence a rather dense panicle, about 5–15 cm long. *Spikelets* (S) numerous and crowded on the more or less erect branches, opening towards maturity to display the dense, whitish hairs of the lemmas of the several florets, later breaking up and falling separately leaving the persistent glumes. *Florets* (F) 5–6, together shorter than the glumes, all similar, awned and bisexual, though the uppermost somewhat smaller than the lower. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) similar, both membranous, without hairs, 5-nerved at the base; the lower glume (G₁) 9–10 mm long, slightly shorter than the upper (G₂). *Lemmas* (L) about 2 mm long (excluding the awns), 9-nerved, the body densely covered with short hairs (2 mm long) with a transverse row of long hairs (4 mm) in the upper part, the tip with 3 lobes, each of which is produced into an awn, the central one delicate and 2–4 mm longer than the lateral ones, which are about 7 mm. *Paleas* (P) slightly convex, flat, 2-keeled, longer than the body of the lemmas. *Anthers* 3, 1 mm long.

This can be a somewhat wiry grass, characteristic of open forest country on rocky or sandy soils. It is largely confined to the higher elevations in southern Queensland. Stock will eat the grass, but it has little economic importance.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ p. 1891; Gardner (1952),² pp. 54–56; Vickery (1956),³ (Key to Australian species); Burbidge and Gray (1970),⁴ pp. 38–43; Willis (1970),⁵ pp. 169–77; Beadle *et al.* (1972),⁶ pp. 649–51; Blake (1972b),⁷ Black (1978),⁸ pp. 115–24; Jessop (1981),⁹ pp. 439–40.

KEY TO SPECIES

(Incl. *Monachather* sp.; see page 311)

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| 1. Lower leaf sheaths very woolly around more or less swollen base of plant (bandicoot grass or mulga oat) | <i>Monachather paradoxa</i> ^{2,3,5,7,8,9}
(<i>D. bipartita</i>) |
| Lower sheaths not woolly, nor base of plant markedly swollen. | 2 |
| 2. Body of lemma with abundant hairs scattered over back. | 3 |
| Lemma with hairs in distinct tufts or transverse rows of tufts. | 6 |

3. Body of lemma 3 mm long or more (incl. callus); shorter dorsal hairs usually over 1 mm long and grading upwards into uppermost band of longer hairs, which are up to 5 mm long.
 Body of lemma 2–2.75 mm long (incl. callus); hairs scattered on back of lemma uniformly short, mostly about 0.5 mm long or less, much shorter than those of upper row, which are about 3.5 mm long. Tall plant (up to 75 cm) with long, fine leaves (long-leaved wallaby grass)
4. Central awn reflexed or about once loosely twisted at base; body of lemma 3–3.5 mm long (incl. callus). Plants leafy, mostly 30–90 cm high.
 Central awn strongly twisted at base; body of lemma 4.5–5.5 mm long (incl. callus).
5. Glumes 4 mm wide.
 Glumes 2.5 mm wide.
6. Lemma with complete transverse row of hair tufts just below sinus; body of lemma 3.5 mm (incl. callus); upper hairs up to 5 mm long.
 Lemma with dorsal and marginal tufts of hair below sinus; body of lemma 4.5–5.5 mm long (incl. callus); hairs 1.2 mm long.
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D. longifolia^{1,3,4,5,6}
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D. induta^{3,5,6}
D. richardsonii^{3,4,5}
D. linkii^{3,4,5,6,8}
- D. tenuior*^{3,4,5,6,7,8}
 (*purpurascens*)
- D. racemosa*^{1,3,4,5,6,8}

