



ECHINOPOGON OVATUS

Forest Hedgehog Grass

A rather slender, erect perennial, 15–70 cm tall. *Culms* arising singly or several together from a slender underground rhizome, sometimes kneed towards the base, slender, erect, with leaves widely separated and opposite along the length, very rough upwardly to the touch, particularly the uppermost internode, striate. *Nodes* slender, without hairs. *Leaves* mostly on the culms, bluish-green in colour. *Leaf sheaths* close, upwardly rough, striate, shorter than the internodes. *Ligule* short, membranous. *Leaf blades* flat, short (2–16 cm) and up to 7 mm wide, slightly constricted at the base, then tapering gradually to a point from above the base, rough along the margins.

Inflorescence a dense spike-like panicle, 1–5 cm long. *Spikelets* (S) 4 mm long, excluding the awn, shortly pedicelled or sessile on the very contracted panicle branches. *Floret* 1, bisexual. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) similar, about 4 mm long, strongly keeled, the back of the keel with upward-pointing spines, the remainder of the back covered with shorter spines, 1-nerved, a broad band of green tissue on either side of the nerve, then the marginal area translucent. *Lemma* (L) 5-nerved, slightly keeled, green, rough on the back, about 4 mm long, coming to a sharply bifid tip, the central nerve produced into a rough awn about 4 mm long from between the points. *Palea* (P) as long as the lemma, 2-nerved and ragged at the tip. *Anthers* 3, 1 mm long.

This is a grass of moister eucalypt forest areas. It is harsh to the touch and not very productive; it is unlikely to be of much significance as a fodder.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ p. 1878; Hubbard (1935a),² t. 3261 (Key to Australian species); Gardner (1952),³ p. 147; Burbidge and Gray (1970),⁴ pp. 48–49; Willis (1970),⁵ p. 153; Beadle *et al.* (1972),⁶ p. 654; Black (1978),⁷ p. 178.

KEY TO SPECIES

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| 1. Spikelets (excluding awns) 5–7 mm long; lemma with two bristle-like lobes up to 2.5 mm long | 2 |
| Spikelets (excluding awns) 3–5 mm long; lemma entire or 2-lobed, lobes short (up to 1.5 mm) | 3 |
| 2. Panicle nodding or inclined, peduncle slender and smooth immediately below panicle (nodding hedgehog grass) | <i>E. nutans</i> ² |
| Panicle stiffly erect, peduncle rough to touch (erect hedgehog grass) | <i>E. intermedius</i> ^{2,4} |
| 3. Culms loosely or densely tufted, not rhizomatous (tufted hedgehog grass) | <i>E. caespitosus</i> ^{2,4,6} |
| Culms loosely clustered or solitary, rhizomatous (forest hedgehog grass) | <i>E. ovatus</i> ^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} |