



ECTROSIA LEPORINA

Hare's-foot Grass

A smooth, slender annual, reaching 70 cm in height. *Culms* erect, round, slender, smooth, arising either singly or severally from a small tuft. *Nodes* 3–4, hairless, the internodes extending beyond the leaf sheaths. *Leaves* mostly basal, rather sparse. *Leaf sheaths* close, smooth and hairless. *Ligule* a narrow rim of very short hairs, some longer, silky hairs on the lateral margins and the lower part of the leaf blade. *Leaf blades* very narrow (1–1.5 mm) and rather short (up to 12 cm), flat, becoming rolled when dry, tapering very gradually to a very fine point.

Inflorescence a very contracted, dense panicle, sometimes almost spike-like, usually slightly interrupted, 5–15 cm long, the short, erect branches densely crowded with the awned spikelets, the short pedicels of which often have some long hairs, so that the whole structure has a “furry” appearance. *Spikelets* (S) often purplish in colour, 2–3 mm long (excluding the awns), at maturity disarticulating above the persistent glumes. *Florets* 3–5, the lowermost one (or occasionally 2) bisexual, the upper ones male or sterile and then reduced to empty glumes, shorter. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) slightly unequal, 1-nerved, membranous, 1-keeled, narrow and pointed; the lower glume (G_1) about 1 mm long; the upper (G_2) 1.5 mm. *Lemmas* (L) about 2 mm long (excluding the awn), membranous, faintly 3-nerved, the tip slightly notched with the central nerve extended into a straight, fine awn nearly as long as the body of the lemma, the upper lemma sometimes reduced to an awn or bristle. *Palea* (P) about $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the lemmas, thinly membranous, narrow, 2-nerved and 2-keeled, the keels with spines down the back. Anthers 3, 0.1 mm long.

The grass is found mostly on sandy soils in the north in open forest, but it is of little significance as a forage grass.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ p. 1908; Hubbard (1936a),² t. 3312 (Key to Australian species); Blake (1941a),³ p. 2; Lazarides (1970),⁴ p. 114; Jessop (1981),⁵ pp. 460-61.

KEY TO SPECIES

Lowest lemma 4–7 mm long.
Lowest lemma 1.5–4 mm long.

E. danesii^{2,3}
E. leporina^{1,2,3,4,5}