



**X7.5**

# *ELYTROPHORUS SPICATUS*

## Spikegrass

A tufted annual, 10–25 cm (occasionally up to 40 cm) tall. *Culms* erect, unbranched, arising from the base, smooth, hairless. *Nodes* few, smooth, hairless, not conspicuous. *Leaves* pale green, basal and on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* loose, striate, shorter than the internodes. *Ligule* an 0.5 mm membranous rim, slightly extended on the margins laterally. *Leaf blades* flat, linear, gradually tapering from above the middle to a point, 2–5 mm broad, and extending up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  the height of the plant, smooth.

*Inflorescence* a distinctly interrupted, spike-like panicle, the very contracted primary branches clustered along the inflorescence axis, which is often  $\frac{3}{4}$  or more of the entire culm; in some well-grown specimens, the lower panicle branches may be extended to include several contracted secondary branches. *Spikelets* (S) numerous in dense fascicle-like clusters, all similar, laterally compressed, about 4 mm long, breaking up at maturity above the persistent glumes. *Florets* 2–7, more or less similar, the lower ones bisexual and the upper one(s) sterile and reduced to a lemma. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) similar, about 2.5 and 2.25 mm long, 1-nerved, keeled, rough on the keel in the upper half, fairly narrow, tapering to a sharp point, rigid along the keel, but becoming membranous towards the margins, which are fringed with long, translucent hairs. *Lemmas* (L) all alike, about 3.5 mm long, more rigid and broader than the glumes and more or less keeled on the back, membranous towards the margin, rough along the upper part of the keels, the tip extending into a short, rough awn. *Paleas* (P) about  $\frac{2}{3}$  the length of the lemmas, 2-nerved, broad and extended laterally from the keels into 2 broad, infolded, membranous wings, hairy along the margins, which meet down the midline. *Stamen* 1, 0.5 mm long, pale yellow.

The grass is fairly widespread in the more arid parts of the region, often on clay soil in areas that are drying out from seasonal flooding.

### REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1901 (as *E. articulatus*); Gardner (1952), pp. 86–87; Jessop (1981), pp. 443–44.

### KEY TO SPECIES

A monospecific genus that occurs in northern Australia and southern Asia.