



ENTEROPOGON ACICULARIS

Curly Windmill Grass

A tufted perennial, 45–100 cm high. *Culms* erect or slightly kneeed at the base, sometimes rooted and also branched at the lower nodes, hairless or somewhat hairy, often bluish-coloured. *Nodes* 3–6 hairless. *Leaves* mostly basal in unbranched specimens, considerably tufted at the nodes in strongly branched ones. *Leaf sheaths* shorter than the internodes in mature plants, tight, often with tuberculate glands, bearded or hairless at the mouth. *Ligule* membranous, about 1 mm long, usually with some hairs up to 4 mm long. *Leaf blades* up to 20 cm long and 4 mm wide, flat, rough down the margins, usually curled at maturity.

Inflorescence a digitate panicle of 3–14 racemes, 4.5–20 cm long, sometimes subdigitate, usually some or all of the racemes bare of or with few spikelets at the base, rigid and spreading in a number of planes, the axis rough. *Spikelets* (S) very shortly pedicelled (up to 0.5 mm long), about 8 mm long (excluding the awns), very narrow, breaking up at maturity above the more or less persistent glumes. *Florets* 2 or sometimes 3, the lowermost bisexual, the upper ones neuter and narrower, reduced to lemmas only. Glumes (G_1 , G_2) very unequal, thinly membranous, strongly 1-nerved, slightly keeled, with short spines down the keel; the lower glume (G_1) 2–5 mm long; the upper (G_2) 5–11 mm long. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower fertile floret 7–9 mm long (including the 1 mm, shortly bearded callus, but excluding the awn), membranous, though thickened on the keel, 3-nerved and slightly keeled, with short spines down the back of the keel, 2-toothed at the apex, with a long, straight, rough awn about 10–15 mm long from between the teeth, becoming purplish at maturity. *Palea* (P_1) narrow, about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the lemma, thinly membranous, 2-nerved and 2-keeled, the tip produced into 2 teeth. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper sterile floret similar to L_1 , but narrower and shorter. Sometimes a further lemma (L_3) is present, but it is much shorter both in the body and awn. *Paleas* absent. *Anthers* 3, 1 mm long.

This is a widespread species, which may be found in the drier parts of southern Queensland. It is a useful native forage species of the arid and semiarid areas.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ pp. 1893–96; Everist (1935, 1938),² pp. 420, 478; Gardner (1952),³ pp. 216–22; Lazarides (1970),⁴ pp. 82–89; Willis (1970),⁵ pp. 163–64 (all as *Chloris* spp.); Lazarides (1972),⁶ p. 51; Jessop (1981),⁷ p. 465.

KEY TO SPECIES

(See also page 157, *Chloris* Key)

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| 1. Basal leaf sheaths distinctly keeled; leaves fine, less than 1.5 mm wide, usually rolled. | <i>E. unispiceus</i> (15)* ^{1,2,6} |
| Basal leaf sheaths rounded on back; leaves usually flat, more than 1.5 mm wide. | 2 |
| 2. Lemma of lower floret 3–6 mm long; spikes usually 1–6. | 3 |
| Lemma of lower floret 7–9 mm long; spikes usually 4–14 (curly windmill grass) | <i>E. acicularis</i> (12) ^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} |
| 3. Lemma of lower floret 3–3.5 mm long; spikes more or less flaccid. | <i>E. minutus</i> (14) ⁶ |
| Lemma of lower floret 3.5–6 mm long; spikes stiff. | <i>E. dolichostachyus</i> (13) ⁶ |

* Numbers in parentheses refer to spikelet illustrations on page 156.