



# ERIACHNE PALLESCENS

## A Wanderrie Grass

An erect, tufted perennial, up to 80 cm in height. *Culms* relatively slender, smooth and hairless. *Nodes* hairless. *Leaves* basal and on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* rather loose, often somewhat inflated and often scale-like at the base, smooth, striate, hairless, though often with some hairs along the overlapping margins below the ligule. *Ligule* inconspicuous, a rim of short hairs with tufts of longer hairs laterally. *Leaf blades* 1-3 mm wide, usually rolled inwards and tapering gradually to a point, the lowest leaves often short and standing more or less erect from the culm.

*Inflorescence* an open panicle with few spikelets borne singly on slender, more or less erect branches. *Spikelets* (S) breaking up at maturity above the persistent glumes, 6 mm long (excluding the short awns). *Florets* 2, both fertile and similar. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) similar, the length of the spikelet (excluding the awns), many-nerved, tough and often purplish, acutely pointed, the margins with fine bristles along the upper part, otherwise hairless. *Lemmas* (L) of both florets similar, the bodies of which are slightly shorter than the glumes, but with the tips extended into single awns up to 6 mm long, 5-nerved, densely hairy all over their backs with a tuft of hairs at the base. *Paleas* (P) of both florets also similar, the bodies of which are about the length of the lemmas, densely hairy all over their backs like the lemmas, 2-nerved and 2-keeled, the keels extended into two short points 1-2 mm long. *Anthers* 2, 1 mm long.

The grass is found growing on poor, sandy soils and rocky ridges of the coastal lowlands, where it may be quite abundant. There are several other species more or less confined to the coastal lowlands and others found on sandy or stony soils and ridges of the subcoastal and inland areas. They are not productive and therefore of little agronomic value.

### REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),<sup>1</sup> pp. 1885-88; Domin (1915),<sup>2</sup> pp. 353-62; Hartley (1942);<sup>3</sup> Gardner (1952),<sup>4</sup> pp. 44-52; Lazarides (1970),<sup>5</sup> pp. 75-83; Black (1978),<sup>6</sup> pp. 123-24; Jessop (1981),<sup>7</sup> pp. 440-43.

### KEY TO SPECIES

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Spikelets distinctly awned.  | 2                                   |
| Spikelets not or scarcely awned.  | 9                                   |
| 2. Inflorescence dense and congested; awns more than twice length of spikelet (longawn Wanderrie grass) | <i>E. armittii</i> <sup>1,5,7</sup> |
| Inflorescence more or less open; awns more or less twice length of spikelet.                            | 3                                   |
| 3. Awns strongly reflexed and curved.   | <i>E. rara</i> <sup>1</sup>         |
| Awns straight.  | 4                                   |

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| 4. Palea with 2 awns equal in length to lemma awn; awns more than twice spikelet length.                   | <i>E. trisetata</i>                          |
| Palea with 2 awns much shorter than lemma awn; awns usually less than twice spikelet length.               | 5  |
| 5. Glumes more than 7 mm long.   | 6  |
| Glumes less than 7 mm long.  | 7  |
| 6. Plants up to 50 cm tall, usually annual. Western (three-awn Wanderrie grass)                            | <i>E. aristidea</i> <sup>1,3,4,5,6,7</sup>   |
| Plants more than 75 cm tall, usually perennial. Coastal.   | <i>E. triodioides</i>                        |
| 7. Palea with 2 short awns.  | <i>E. pallescens</i> <sup>1,2</sup>          |
| Palea without awns.  | ( <i>muelleri</i> )                          |
|  | 8  |
| 8. Perennial. Spikelets usually 1-flowered. Basal leaf sheaths and culms not with tubercle-based bristles. | <i>E. anomala</i> <sup>3</sup>               |
| Annual. Spikelets always 2-flowered. Basal leaf sheaths and culms with tubercle-based bristles.            | <i>E. ciliata</i> <sup>1,4,7</sup>           |
| 9. Spikelets less than 4 mm long.  | 10   |
| Spikelets more than 4.5 mm long.   | 12   |
| 10. Annual. Northwestern.  | 11   |
| Perennial.   | 13   |
| 11. Inflorescence densely spike-like, less than 3.5 cm long. Western.                                      | <i>E. pulchella</i> <sup>4,5,6,7</sup>       |
| Inflorescence loosely spike-like, more than 3.5 cm long. Northwestern.                                     | <i>E. dominii</i> <sup>3,4</sup>             |
| 12. Inflorescence branches long and slender. Glumes equal to spikelet length.                              | <i>E. insularis</i> <sup>2</sup>             |
| Inflorescence branches short and stiff. Glumes slightly shorter than spikelet length.                      | <i>E. glabrata</i> <sup>3</sup>              |
| 13. Butt bulbous and woolly (woollybut or buck Wanderrie grass)  | <i>E. helmsii</i> <sup>3,4,5,6,7</sup>       |
| Butt not as above.   | 14   |
| 14. Lemma more than 7 mm long (swamp Wanderrie grass)  | <i>E. benthamii</i> <sup>3,4,5,6,7</sup>     |
| Lemma less than 7 mm long.   | 15   |
| 15. Lemmas bluntly pointed, 3–4.75 mm long (northern Wanderrie grass)                                      | <i>E. obtusa</i> <sup>1,4,5,7</sup>          |
| Lemmas sharply pointed, 5–6 mm long (mountain Wanderrie grass)   | <i>E. mucronata</i> <sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> |