



# *ERIOCHLOA PSEUDOACROTRICHA*

## Early Spring Grass

A loosely tufted perennial, erect or slightly kneed at the base, light green in colour, 20–100 cm high. *Culms* straight or slightly bent at the lower nodes, smooth, striate, moderately slender, occasionally branched, sometimes slightly hairy near the nodes. *Nodes* obvious, brown pigmented, very finely covered with tiny hairs. *Leaves* mostly basal. *Leaf sheaths* striate, smooth and hairless, mostly shorter than the internodes, becoming loose towards the base of the plant. *Ligule* a dense row of short hairs. *Leaf blades* narrow and linear, up to 30 cm long and 4 mm broad, somewhat rolled inward along the margin, often slightly hairy near the ligule, tapering from near the middle to a fine point.

*Inflorescence* a narrow panicle, 7–18 cm long, consisting of 2–10 racemes, each 2–10 cm in length, borne alternately along either side of the axis, the branches at first erect but later becoming more reflexed, the raceme axis flattened and angular, mostly covered with short, fine hairs. *Spikelets* (S) all alike, 4.5–6 mm long, 1.1–1.4 mm broad, borne more or less in pairs along either side of the axis on pedicels 0.5–2.5 mm long, a tuft of long hairs up to 3 mm long at the top of each pedicel at the point of attachment of the spikelet, a darkly pigmented annular callus at the base, the spikelets falling entire from the pedicel at maturity. *Florets* 2, the lower sterile and reduced to a lemma, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* ( $G_1$ ,  $G_2$ ) very dissimilar; the lower glume ( $G_1$ ) reduced to a small scale about 1 mm long, fused to the lowermost internode of the spikelet and darkly pigmented to form the collar or callus; the upper ( $G_2$ ) the length of the spikelet, faintly 5-nerved, densely covered on the back with long, silky hairs, coming to a long point at the tip. *Lemma* ( $L_1$ ) of the lower sterile floret similar to but slightly shorter than  $G_2$ . *Palea* absent. *Lemma* ( $L_2$ ) of the upper fertile floret about  $\frac{2}{3}$  the length of  $L_1$ , smooth, shining, hardened, the margins partly enclosing the palea, faintly 5-nerved, rounded on the back and sides, but terminating in a short spine about 1 mm long. *Palea* ( $P_2$ ) about the same length, also hardened, rounded, faintly 2-nerved. *Anthems* 3, 1 mm long.

The grass is common throughout southern Queensland. Given moisture, it makes very early growth in spring and may be a useful feed at this time. It flowers early and thereafter becomes of little value to grazing stock.

### REFERENCES

- Bailey (1902),<sup>1</sup> p. 1816; Blake (1941a),<sup>2</sup> pp. 18-19; Blake (1943),<sup>3</sup> pp. 43-44; Blake (1948)<sup>4</sup>, p. 156; Gardner (1952),<sup>5</sup> pp. 231-33; Vickery (1961),<sup>6</sup> pp. 76-80; Lazarides (1970),<sup>7</sup> pp. 164-67; Willis (1970),<sup>8</sup> p. 198; Beadle *et al.* (1972),<sup>9</sup> p. 665; Black (1978),<sup>10</sup> pp. 220-21; Jessop (1981),<sup>11</sup> pp. 477-78.

### KEY TO SPECIES

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| 1. Annual. Spikelets 6–12 mm long. Western.  | <i>E. australiensis</i> <sup>2,3,5,6,7,10,11</sup>  |
| Perennial. Spikelets 3–6 mm long. Widespread.  | ( <i>longiflora</i> )                               |
| 2. Spikelets 4.5–6 mm long. Common in southeastern Queensland (early spring grass)   | 2   |
| Spikelets less than 4.5 mm long.   | <i>E. pseudoacrotricha</i> <sup>1,3,5,6,7,8,9</sup> |
| 3. Spikelets 3.7–4.2 mm long, crowded and overlapping on racemes. Plants taller, erect, with stouter stems. Mainly of western distribution on black soils (spring grass or cupgrass) | 3   |
| Spikelets 3–3.75 mm long, less crowded, rather neatly arranged in 2 rows on racemes. Plants slender, erect or ascending. Mainly coastal or subcoastal (spring grass or cupgrass)     | <i>E. crebra</i> <sup>4,6,11</sup>                  |
|  | <i>E. procera</i> <sup>1,6,9</sup>                  |