



HYMENACHNE ACUTIGLUMA

A creeping perennial of aquatic sites, rooting freely from the nodes of the trailing stems. *Culms* rather thick with a spongy pith, branching at the lower trailing nodes, but not the upper erect part, up to 1 m or more tall, smooth. *Nodes* numerous, the basal ones rooted and/or branched, pigmented, hairless and smooth. *Leaves* on the culms, green, dark-green to purplish. *Leaf sheaths* loose, striate, smooth, papery at the lower nodes, sometimes shortly hairy, shorter than the internodes. *Ligule* a short, 1 mm membrane. *Leaf blades* up to 40 cm long and 1–3 cm wide, expanded and rather clasping the stem at the base, gradually tapering upwards to a fine point, smooth, except somewhat rough down the margins and sometimes some long hairs near the base.

Inflorescence a narrow spike-like panicle up to 50 cm long and 1–3.5 cm wide, green, the branches not spreading, the rhachis of the branches winged, with the branchlets or spikelets arranged on one face. *Spikelets* (S) all similar, narrow, 4–5 mm long, finely pointed, borne on short, slightly rough pedicels, green, at maturity falling entire. *Florets* 2, the lower one sterile, the upper one bisexual. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) unequal, membranous; the lower (G₁) about $\frac{1}{3}$ the length of the spikelet, 3–5-nerved, the middle nerve prominent and slightly rough on the back in the upper part, the broad base embracing the base of the spikelet; the upper (G₂) $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the spikelet, slightly less membranous than G₁, prominently 3–5-nerved, rough on the back of the nerves in the upper part, sharply pointed. *Lemmas* (L₁, L₂) unequal and dissimilar; L₁ like G₂, but equal the length of the spikelet, 5-nerved, the point extended into a short, rough, pointed tip; L₂ thinly membranous, about $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the spikelet, rounded on the back, 2–4-nerved, smooth, embracing the palea. *Palea* (P₂) similar to L₂, 2-nerved, not keeled, slightly truncate at the tip, the margins turned inwards. *Anthers* 3, about 1 mm long, creamy-yellow.

This grass varies greatly in size, particularly in the leaves and inflorescence. It is fairly common in the northern swampy lands of Australia, where it is considered to be a good fodder for domestic grazing animals and buffaloes. The animals will wade out into the water to eat it.

REFERENCES

Blake (1954), p. 108 (as *H. amplexicaulis*); Gilliland (1971), pp. 154–55.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in Australia.