



HYPARRHENIA FILIPENDULA

Tambookie Grass

A densely tufted perennial. *Culms* erect, 1–1.5 m tall, moderately slender, smooth and hairless, branched from the nodes. *Nodes* without hairs. *Leaves* both basal and on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* rather loose, keeled, striate, smooth and hairless. *Ligule* membranous, about 1 mm long, torn along the top, a tuft of white, silky hairs on each side. *Leaf blades* moderately narrow (1.5–5 mm wide), long (15–30 cm), tapering gradually to a point, flat or somewhat rolled inwards, the margins slightly rough downwards, the mid-rib conspicuous and whitish, a few long, silky hairs towards the base.

Inflorescence a narrow panicle, the branches slender, one or a few together, partly enclosed by spathes, at maturity exerted from the spathes, which are narrow, 36 cm long and tapering to a fine point, often reddish in colour; racemes usually in pairs on individual branches, one terminal, the other subterminal, the lower one often reflexed or standing out at right angles; 1 or 2 awned spikelets per raceme, the raceme branches or pedicels with some long, silky hairs shortly below the base. *Spikelets* (S_1 , S_2) in pairs on the raceme, not all alike, the lowermost 1–2 pairs of similar sex, the upper 1–2 pairs of different sex; in the terminal raceme, there are usually 2 pairs of male spikelets at the base of the raceme with 1 bisexual/male spikelet pair above; in the lateral raceme, 1 pair of male spikelets below and 2 of the bisexual/male pairs above, the sessile spikelet either male, neuter or bisexual; when male or neuter, similar to the pedicellate spikelet and not awned; when bisexual, awned and rather different from the male or neuter spikelets. *Florets* 2 in each spikelet, the lower usually sterile and reduced to a lemma only; the upper female or bisexual in the awned sessile spikelets, male or neuter in the unawned sessile spikelets. *Fertile spikelet* (S_1) sessile, awned, 6–8 mm long, pale or purplish in colour, a tuft of bristly hairs at the base. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) about equal; the lower glume (G_1) truncate or slightly keeled and hairy down the back of the keel. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower sterile floret, membranous, $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of G_1 , nerveless, blunt or 2-shouldered, hairy around the margin in the upper part, produced at the top into a twisted awn 4–5 cm long, the column densely clothed with brown hairs. *Palea* absent. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper fertile floret narrow and strap-like, membranous towards the base; the tip, which is faintly 2-pointed, produced into a 4–5 cm long, hairy, brown awn. *Palea* absent. *Anthers* 3, 2 mm long. *Pedicellate spikelet* (S_2) often also purplish, 6–7 mm long. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) unequal; the lower glume (G_1) the length of the spikelet, 11-nerved, the tip produced into a stiff bristle 1–6 mm long; the upper (G_2) about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of G_1 , 3-nerved, slightly hairy along the margin of the upper part. *Lemma* (L_1) of the lower sterile floret faintly 3-nerved, membranous, hairy along the margins of the upper part. *Palea* absent. *Lemma* (L_2) of the upper male floret 1-nerved, membranous, slightly hairy along the margins of the upper part. *Anthers* 3, 2.5 mm long.

The grass is widespread in the eastern part of southern Queensland, where it is quite a valuable species of the native pastures of the area, especially during droughts and in the winter. Fairly readily eaten by stock, it is often difficult to distinguish in grazed native pastures from *Themeda australis* (Kangaroo grass), with which it is frequently found growing. *H. hirta* is less common and largely confined to the area southeast of the Darling Downs on traprock soils.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ p. 1866 (as *Andropogon filipendulus*); Vickery (1961),² p. 56; Clayton (1969),³ pp. 60-95; Black (1978),⁴ p. 245.

KEY TO SPECIES

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| 1. Spikelets covered with rusty-brown hairs (thatchgrass) | <i>H. rufa</i> ³ |
| Spikelets covered with white hairs or hairless. | 2 |
| 2. 5-7 awned spikelets on each raceme, awns about 1.5-2.5 cm long (Coolatai or Tambookie grass) | <i>H. hirta</i> ^{2,3,4} |
| 1-2 awned spikelets on each raceme, awns about 4-5 cm long (Tambookie grass) | <i>H. filipendula</i> ^{1,2,3} |