



Fs
X4.5



S₁



S₁

G₁



G₂



L₁



P₁



L₂



S₂

G₁



G₂



L

X6.8

LAMARCKIA AUREA

Goldentop

A short annual, 10–15 cm, rarely up to 40 cm high, single or multi-culmed and then more or less loosely tufted. *Culms* erect to slightly decumbent at the base, more or less branched from or near the base. *Nodes* pigmented at maturity, few. *Leaves* basal and on the culm, green. *Leaf sheaths* rather loose, often concealing the nodes, smooth. *Ligule* membranous, pointed, up to 8 mm long. *Leaf blades* flat, up to 20 cm long, 3–7 mm wide, slightly rough down the margin, otherwise smooth, tapering gradually to a fine point.

Inflorescence a contracted ovoid panicle of densely packed fascicles borne on short panicle branches, the fascicles (Fs) each with 3–6 branches arranged on one side of a slightly curved axis, the base and branches with dense, stiff, white hairs. *Spikelets* (S_1 , S_2) of two types, either fertile (S_1) or sterile (S_2), which at maturity fall entire with the fascicle. *Fertile spikelets* (S_1) awned, borne singly and terminally on the fascicle branches, about 3–5 mm long (excluding the awns), slightly flattened and largely hidden by the sterile spikelets. *Florets* 2, dissimilar, borne on a slender rhachilla, the lower bisexual, 2–5 mm long, the upper sterile or male, borne on a further slender pedicel (rhachilla joint), 0.5 mm long. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) similar, narrow-lanceolate, membranous, 4 mm long, 1-nerved, sharply pointed to shortly awned, the length of the floret. *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) unequal, membranous, each with a 6 mm long, slender, straight awn from just below the tip, barely 1-nerved; L_1 2.5 mm long; L_2 0.5 mm long. *Palea* (P_1) membranous, the length of the lemma, faintly 2-keeled, blunt; P_2 usually absent. *Anthers* 3, yellow, 0.5 mm long. *Sterile spikelets* (S_2) unawned, 1–3 in each fascicle. *Florets* numerous, all sterile and reduced to lemmas, borne on an attenuated rhachilla axis. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) similar to the fertile floret, but slightly shorter. *Lemmas* (L) all similar, 2 mm long, very rounded and rather flat, faintly 3-nerved, papery. *Paleas* absent.

An uncommon exotic temperate grass, which is restricted to the southern temperate parts of the zone. It is occasionally grown for the decorative character of its flower-head, but it appears to have no value as a pasture grass.

REFERENCES

Gardner (1952), p. 42; Willis (1970), p. 109; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 638; Black (1978), p. 148.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in the region.