



X4.1

LEERSIA HEXANDRA

Swamp Ricegrass

An erect but weak grass, up to 1 m tall, aquatic or semi-aquatic, rooting freely at the lower nodes in mud. *Culms* erect, smooth, without hairs, the flower-heads nodding over slightly. *Nodes* without hairs. *Leaves* mostly on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* rather loose, particularly in the lower parts, striate, smooth and without hairs, on the submerged part of the culm without blades and forming almost cylindrical scales. *Ligule* a membranous flap, 3 mm long. *Leaf blades* finely but sharply rough downwards on the margins, slightly rough down the back of the mid-rib, shorter and wider towards the base of the plant, finer and longer towards the top.

Inflorescence a loosely contracted panicle, 5–10 cm long, the fine, slightly flexuous branches remaining more or less erect. *Spikelets* (S) 3.5 mm long, on short pedicels, all similar and numerous along the panicle branches, somewhat overlapping; at maturity, falling entire from the pedicels. *Floret* 1, bisexual, strongly flattened laterally. *Glumes* reduced to a faint rim. *Lemma* (L) membranous, strongly keeled, rounded on the back with a row of curved spines along the keel, 5-nerved, the two lateral ones marginal, the margins with short spines. *Palea* (P) membranous, strongly keeled, also with hooked spines along the keel, 3-nerved, narrower and more or less flat on the back. *Anthers* 6, 2.5 mm long.

This semi-aquatic grass is found commonly in swamps and streams all along the coastal and subcoastal region. It is eaten by stock, but is not sufficiently plentiful to be regarded as a valuable fodder grass.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1845; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 622; Vickery (1975), pp. 273-76.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species of this genus is found in Australia.