



LOPHOCHLOA CRISTATA

Annual Cat's-tail

Annual, erect and tufted, up to 30 cm tall, often only 10 cm tall. *Culms* erect, smooth, hairless, generally unbranched, rather few, sparsely leafy. *Nodes* not enlarged, pigmented, hairless, the internodes longer than the sheaths at maturity. *Leaves* basal and on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* hairless or sparsely hairy, smooth, somewhat loose, becoming papery. *Ligule* short and membranous. *Leaf blades* hairless or sparsely hairy, particularly at the base near the ligule, flat, up to 10 cm long and 2 mm wide, tapering gradually to a fine point.

Inflorescence a dense, spike-like panicle, 2–7 cm long, cylindrical, or slightly branched in large specimens. *Spikelets* (S) all similar, 2–4 mm long, laterally compressed, several variously shortly pedicelled on the contracted panicle branches, breaking up at maturity above the persistent glumes and between the florets. *Florets* 2–7, similar, all bisexual, the upper ones tending to be smaller than the lower. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) narrow, acute, shorter than the spikelet, transparent, except green on and between the nerves; the lower glume (G₁) about $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the upper, about 2 mm, 1-nerved; the upper (G₂) 2.5–3 mm long, 3-nerved, broader than G₁. *Lemmas* (L) the same length as or slightly exceeding G₂, slightly broader, blunt or slightly 2-pointed at the tip, 5-nerved and strongly keeled down the mid-rib, the mid-nerve extended into a very short awn about 1–2 mm long. *Paleas* (P) $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the lemmas, very narrow, faintly 2-nerved and 2-keeled, and 2-pointed at the tip. *Anthems* 3, 0.2 mm long.

Originating from the Mediterranean region, this grass is now widespread in winter rainfall areas of Australia. It extends into the border areas of southern southeast Queensland, where it grows as a winter species. It does not provide much herbage, but is eaten by stock and found as a weed. It flowers in early spring and then rapidly matures.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1902 (as *Koeleria phleoides*); Gardner (1952), p. 60; Burbidge and Gray (1970), p. 34; Willis (1970), pp. 128–29; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 649; Black (1978), p. 167.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in southern Queensland.