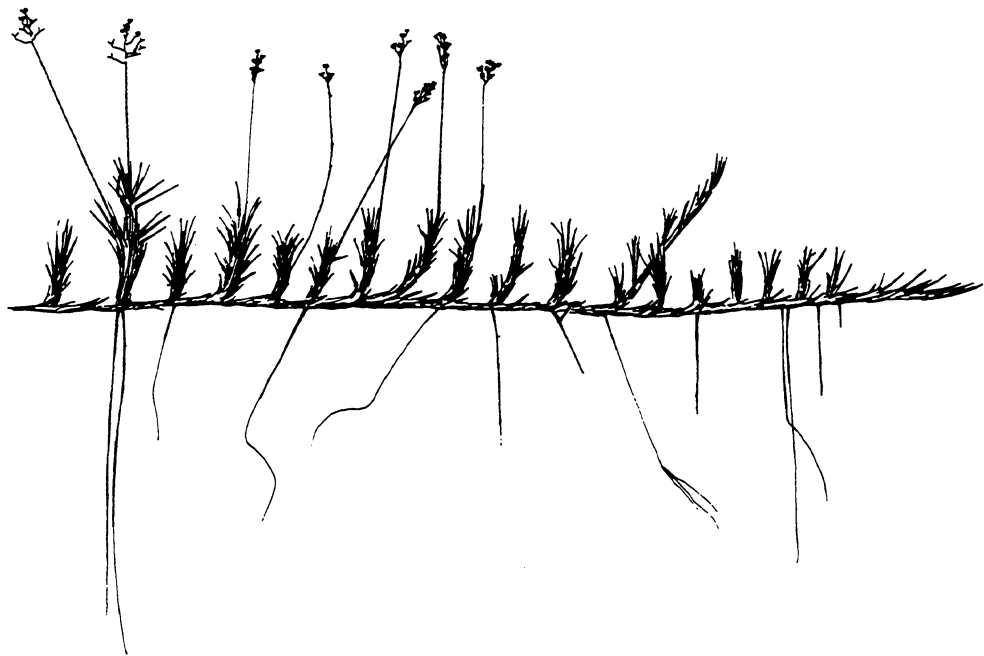


X17.1



MICRAIRA SUBULIFOLIA

A very low, mat-forming perennial, the mats up to 1 m in diameter, green to yellowish. *Culms* 6–8 cm tall from the trailing stems, which frequently also are rooted. *Nodes* not apparent. *Leaves* closely spirally arranged on the culms, almost scale-like on the trailing culms. *Leaf sheaths* closely overlapping and persistent, scale-like. *Ligule* a rim of short hairs. *Leaf blades* spreading when fresh, erect when dry, 5–10 mm long, 0.3–1 mm wide, flat, narrowing towards the tip to a boat-shaped point, densely closely arranged and almost moss-like.

Inflorescence a panicle, 7–15 mm long, ovate, dark purple at anthesis, the upper part of the flowering culm very slender. *Spikelets* (S) all more or less similar, borne singly on short secondary branches, oblong, about 1 mm long, disarticulating above the glumes and falling separately. *Florets* 2, similar and fertile or sometimes with the lower floret male or reduced. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) equal or slightly unequal, usually shorter than the spikelet, usually 1-nerved. *Lemmas* (L) mostly similar, 5–9 parallel nerves, unequal in length, almost rectangular in shape. *Paleas* (P) shorter and narrower, rectangular, 5–7-nerved with 4 nerves in pairs towards the margins, 1–3 parallel nerves towards the middle, often with a mid-nerve. *Anthers* 2, about 1 mm long.

This is a most curious grass, found only on the Glass House Mountains of southeast Queensland and on isolated ranges in north Queensland. It is the only known genus with spirally arranged leaves and moss-like habit.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1888; Blake (1964); Clifford (1964); Lazarides (1979), p. 70.

KEY TO SPECIES

This is the only species in southern Queensland.