



MICROLAENA STIPOIDES

Meadow Ricegrass or Weeping Grass

A slender perennial, 30–70 cm tall, diffusely tufted. *Culms* rounded, slender, usually weeping when in flower, smooth and hairless, sparingly branched above, the shoots arising from scaly buds as short underground rhizomes. *Nodes* small, hairless, the internodes longer than the leaf sheaths in mature culms. *Leaves* mainly on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* close, smooth, hairless, striate. *Ligule* reduced to a short, membranous rim fringed with a few long, silky hairs. *Leaf blades* rather short, up to 10 cm long and 4 mm wide, hairless, smooth, except slightly rough along the margins, tapering gradually to a fine point.

Inflorescence a narrow flexuous panicle, 8–16 cm long, or reduced to a simple raceme in small forms, the branches erect, bearing one to several spikelets. *Spikelets* (S) awned, all similar, 8–10 mm long (excluding the awns), narrow, disarticulating above the persistent glumes at maturity. *Florets* 3, the lower 2 reduced to sterile lemmas bearing long awns, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) more or less equal, minute, less than 1 mm long, 1-nerved. *Lemmas* (L₁, L₂, L₃) all different; the lower 2 sterile lemmas rigid and rough, prominently awned, both without paleas, the awns and backs of the nerves covered with short spines; L₁ shorter than L₂, the base extended somewhat into a beak, which is densely tufted at its base with short, stiff hairs, 5-nerved; L₂, 8–9 mm long with the awn twice its length, 5–7-nerved; L₃ about the length of L₁, awnless or slightly pointed, rigid, smooth, 5–7-nerved, slightly keeled in the upper half of the back and then shortly spined. *Palea* (P₃) thinly membranous, faintly 1-nerved or nerveless, narrow. *Anthers* 4, 4 mm long.

This grass is widespread but only locally common in eastern Queensland, where it is found growing in semi-shade in forest and woodland, often, though not necessarily, in damp places. It is eaten by stock, but is not likely to be an important component of the diet of domestic stock.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1872; Gardner (1952), p. 16; Clifford (1962); Burbidge and Gray (1970), pp. 60–62; Willis (1970), p. 90; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 661; Vickery (1975), pp. 297–300; Black (1978), p. 99.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species is found in southern Queensland.