



PARACTAENUM NOVAE-HOLLANDIAE

Reflexed Panic or Reverse Grass

Annual grass, 30–40 cm tall. *Culms* rather weak, sprawling to ascending, branched from the nodes, smooth, hairless. *Nodes* 2–3, smooth, hairless, dark-pigmented at maturity. *Leaves* mostly on the culms, bright green. *Leaf sheaths* loose, thinly textured, striate, the lower ones often purplish-coloured, shorter than the internodes. *Ligule* 1 mm long, membranous, but fringed with short hairs along the top. *Leaf blades* flat, flaccid, 2–5 mm wide and up to 12 cm long.

Inflorescence an elongate, racemose panicle of several racemes, 2–6 cm long, either opposite or alternate and distantly spread along the main axis, or closely bunched up; at first barely exerted from the uppermost leaf sheath and then the racemes erect, but later spreading and finally reflexed, the rhachis produced beyond the ultimate spikelet of the raceme as a naked, coarse, bristle-like point. *Spikelets* (S) solitary, few, alternately borne along one side of a flattened rhachis, sessile or almost so, at maturity falling entire or with the spike or panicle branch, 4–5 mm long, the lowermost spikelet of each raceme subtended by a bristle-like appendage of about the spikelet's length. *Florets* 2, the lowermost sterile and without palea, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) very unequal and dissimilar, papery-firm; the lower glume (G_1) $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the spikelet, 3–5-nerved, rounded at the tip, membranous on the margins and the slightly inflated base; the upper (G_2) the length of the spikelet, many-nerved, broad, rounded on the back. *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) unequal and dissimilar; L_1 like G_2 in length and nerve number, but slightly thinner-textured; L_2 hardened, rigid and shining, faintly 3-nerved, about $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of L_1 . *Palea* (P_2) like L_2 in texture, but slightly shorter, somewhat 2-keeled with the margins infolded, flat on the back between the nerves, P_1 absent. *Anthers* 3, 2 mm long, pale yellow.

This grass is found sporadically through the arid zone, particularly on red sandy soils, often associated with spinifex.

REFERENCES

Blake (1948b), p. 160; Gardner (1952), pp. 245–46; Lazarides (1970), pp. 189–91; Vickery (1975), pp. 223–24; Black (1978), p. 225; Jessop (1981), p. 482.

KEY TO SPECIES

This is a monospecific, endemic Australian genus.