



PLAGIOSETUM REFRACTUM

Drooping Oatgrass

A densely to loosely tufted annual up to 50 cm tall. *Culms* fine to moderately robust, more or less erect, often prostrate at the base and then rooting at the lower nodes, often branching strongly at the nodes, sometimes becoming purplish towards the base. *Nodes* pigmented, 3-4, smooth. *Leaves* green, on the culms, especially in the lower part. *Leaf sheaths* loose, striate, persistent, especially at the base and becoming chaffy, shorter than the internodes, smooth to slightly rough. *Ligule* a rim of dense, silky hairs about 1 mm long. *Leaf blades* flat, 2-10 cm long, 2-5 mm wide, gradually tapering to a fine point, striate.

Inflorescence a spike-like panicle up to 20 cm long, bearing scattered, contracted lateral branches alternately along the axis on one side, the branches each bearing 1 to 2 spikelets, at first erect or spreading, but later becoming deflexed, both the main axis and the lateral branches strongly flattened, the latter further branching at the level of the spikelet to form an "involucre" of bristles, which are distinctly downwardly rough and flattened; in the upper part of the inflorescence, the terminal spikelets sometimes infertile and almost devoid of bristles. *Spikelets* (S) mostly all alike, 6-7.5 mm long (excluding the bristles), on flattened pedicels 1.5-4 mm long, at maturity tardily disarticulating entire at the pedicel. *Florets* 2, the lower sterile, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) smooth, hairless, unequal; the lower glume (G_1) about $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the spikelet, 6-7-nerved, the lateral nerves incomplete and joining the adjacent nerves; the upper (G_2) the length of the spikelet, many-nerved, broad. *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) dissimilar; L_1 like G_2 in size, shape and nervation; L_2 about $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the spikelet, smooth, hardened, shining, 5-nerved, rounded, with the margins incurved to clasp the palea. *Palea* (P_2) similar to L_2 in texture and length, 2-nerved and keeled, flat between the keels on the back, the lateral margins thickly membranous and folded inwards, P_1 absent. *Anthers* 3, 2.25 mm long, yellow.

This grass is found in the western part of the region on sandhills or deep, red, sandy soils. It is widespread, but not usually common.

REFERENCES

Gardner (1952), pp. 290-91; Lazarides (1970), pp. 200-1; Vickery (1975), pp. 224-25; Black (1978), pp. 229-30; Jessop (1981), p. 482.

KEY TO SPECIES

This is a monospecific Australian genus.