



PSEUDOPOGONATHERUM IRRITANS

An erect, tufted annual up to 150 cm tall, distinctive with its dark brown flower-head. *Culms* slender to fairly robust, generally few from the base, smooth, hairless, usually unbranched. *Nodes* up to 9, smooth, not conspicuous, but slightly swollen from the base of the leaf sheath. *Leaves* pale green, from the base and on the culms, but rather sparse. *Leaf sheaths* fairly loose, shorter than the internodes, striate. *Ligule* a dense rim of very short hairs and sparser longer hairs up to 3 mm long, which are also extended up the base of the leaf blade for a short distance. Leaf blade long and narrow, 2–3 mm wide and up to 70 cm long, striate, slightly rough down the margins, erect, fairly rigid, tapering gradually to a point from near the tip.

Inflorescence a subdigitate panicle of many racemes up to 12 cm long, the racemes up to 10 cm long, dark brown to blackish-coloured, with golden awns at maturity; when shattered, the spikelet pedicels remaining and covered with dense, silky-white hairs. *Spikelets* (S) similar, both pedicellate, one shortly, the other longer, 4 mm long, excluding the awns, dark brown, at maturity falling entire and disarticulating obliquely below the glumes to form a sharp point with an accompanying barb of stiff hairs. *Florets* 2, the lower one sterile and reduced to a small membranous lemma, the upper one bisexual. *Glumes* (G₁, G₂) slightly subequal, rigid and tough, brown; the lower glume (G₁) the length of the spikelet, rounded on the back, slightly 2-toothed at the apex, central nerve faint, 2 lateral nerves prominent, covered on the back, outside of the 2 lateral nerves and in the lower part of the mid-line, with stiff white hairs; the upper (G₂) slightly shorter than G₁, faintly 3-nerved, the central nerve more obvious and extended into a rather fine, kneed awn about 8 mm long. *Lemmas* (L₁, L₂) very dissimilar; L₁ of the lower sterile floret delicately membranous and reduced to 1 mm long, L₂ of the upper fertile floret narrow, membranous on the margin, 1-nerved, the nerve produced into a double-kneed, twisted, up to 4 cm-long awn, dark brown to black in the lower part and covered with stiff hairs. *Paleas* absent in both florets. *Anthers* 3, 1.5 mm long, dark purple.

This is a grass of the northern part of the region. It occurs sporadically in woodland and heathland.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902),¹ pp. 1852–53 (as *Pollinia irritans*); Bor (1960),² pp. 204–5; Henty (1969),³ pp. 163–65.

KEY TO SPECIES

Racemes 4–5 cm long, awn up to 1.5 cm long.
Racemes 7–12 cm long, awn 2.5–3.5 cm long.

*P. contortum*²
P. irritans^{1,2,3}