



THAUMASTOCHLOA PUBESCENS

An annual of variable form and stature, from 5 to 30 cm tall. *Culms* erect to loosely ascending, often somewhat prostrate at the base, branching freely from the nodes and sometimes becoming quite bushy, slender and smooth. *Nodes* smooth, hairless, several. *Leaves* on the culms, green to olive-green, sometimes becoming reddish. *Leaf sheaths* loose, frequently longer than the internodes, striate, becoming increasingly pubescent towards the base, otherwise smooth. *Ligule* a rim of fairly dense, stiff hairs. *Leaf blades* flat, fairly rigid, rough on the margins, up to 4 mm wide and 5 cm long, tapering from above the middle to a point.

Inflorescence a cylindrical spike, usually one, but sometimes several together, at first enclosed by the uppermost leaf sheath, which is almost without a leaf blade and therefore spathe-like, later, at maturity, distinctly exerted on a slender, tapering peduncle and disarticulating at the joints. *Spikelets* (S) 4–9, sessile, single and alternating along one side of the axis, mostly all alike, 2–3 mm long, completely contained within a cavity in the rhachis, hairless, falling entire with the rhachis joints at maturity. *Florets* 2, the lower sterile and reduced to a lemma, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) very dissimilar; the lower glume (G_1) the length of the spikelet, rigid and thickened, broad, slightly hairy at the base, 5–9-nerved, the nerves prominent on most spikelets and then bumpy between the nerves on the back, the bumps often lined up in transverse ridges; the upper (G_2) membranous, slightly shorter than G_1 , 3–5-nerved, if 5-nerved, the two lateral nerves close, keeled along the lateral nerves and rounded on the back. *Lemmas* (L_1 , L_2) subequal, thinly membranous, slightly shorter than the glumes, 2-nerved with the nerves near the margins, flat on the back between the nerves; L_1 slightly longer and broader than L_2 . *Palea* P_2 very delicately membranous, slightly shorter than L_2 , nerveless, the basal part with 2 membranous flaps enclosing the ovary or fruit; P_1 absent. *Anthers* 3, narrow.

This grass is found on sandy soils in the northern region, often associated with *Melaleuca* in heathlands or *Eucalyptus* along stream-beds.

REFERENCES

Hubbard (1936b); Gardner (1952), pp. 309–10.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species of this essentially northern Australian–Asian genus is found in the region.