



TRAGUS AUSTRALIANUS

Small Burrgrass

An erect to semi-erect annual. *Culms* up to 40 cm tall, unbranched, minutely hairy, striate. *Nodes* 2–4, hairless. *Leaves* basal or close in the lower part of the culm. *Leaf sheaths* slightly striate upwards, otherwise smooth, the uppermost loose and inflated. *Ligule* short, membranous, with short hairs, less than 1 mm long. *Leaf blades* green to blue-green, rigid, short and broad, up to 5 cm long and 2.5–5 mm wide, pointed, rounded at the base, flat, with sharply wavy edges, usually flexuous or sometimes twisted, the thickened margins bordered by acute, tubercle-based hairs.

Inflorescence a spike-like panicle, 5–8 cm long, the axis finely hairy, the very contracted branches each bearing a pair of spikelets. *Spikelets* (S) 4 mm long, similar, pointed, rounded and very spiny on the back, flat or slightly concave on the front, borne in pairs opposing one another, falling entire at maturity. *Floret* 1, bisexual. *Glumes* (G_1 , G_2) very unequal; the lower glume (G_1) minute (up to 0.25 mm) or absent, membranous, triangular; the upper (G_2) as long as the spikelet, broadly pointed, 5–7-nerved, with numerous, heavy, hooked spines along the nerves on the back, the apex smooth or rough, the intervening spaces hairless or hairy, membranous, the margins rough. *Lemma* (L) narrower than the upper glume, pointed, 3-nerved, the lateral nerves not evident above the middle, almost as long as the spikelet. *Palea* (P) almost as long as the lemma, 2-keeled. *Anthers* 3, 0.5 mm long.

This grass is widespread in southern Queensland and over much of the warmer parts of Australia. It is often abundant on sandy soil, but also commonly colonizes bare places in grassland on heavy soils, clay-pans and disturbed ground. Although of low productivity, it is grazed to some extent. However, the burrs may be a nuisance in fleece.

REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1846 (incl. in *T. racemosus*); Blake (1941a), pp. 12–16; Gardner (1952), p. 185; Lazarides (1970), p. 242; Willis (1970), p. 155; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 659; Vickery (1975), pp. 305–6; Black (1978), p. 211; Jessop (1981), p. 470.

KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in southern Queensland.