



## *TRIRAPHIS MOLLIS*

### Purple Needle Grass

A tufted, slender perennial growing to about 60 cm in height, though often quite small, usually coloured purple towards the base. *Culms* slender, erect, hairless and smooth, not branching above the base. *Nodes* purple, without hairs. *Leaves* mainly basal. *Leaf sheaths* without hairs, smooth, striate, the lowermost ones coloured purple. *Ligule* a dense rim of short, stiff hairs. *Leaf blades* narrow (1–1.5 mm), long (up to 50 cm) and pointed.

*Inflorescence* a narrow, fairly contracted panicle, up to 25 cm long, the spikelets shortly pedicelled and crowded on the more or less erect, short branches. *Spikelets* (S) 4 mm long (excluding the awns), breaking up at maturity above the persistent glumes. *Florets* (F) 8–10, all similar (except the terminal one, which is small), bisexual, 4.5–6 mm long (excluding the 3 awns), with a small tuft of hairs at the base. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) narrow, 1-nerved, membranous,  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of the spikelet, slightly unequal and dissimilar; the lower glume (G<sub>1</sub>) pointed and slightly shorter; the upper (G<sub>2</sub>) longer and coming to a small, 2-pointed tip, the nerve extended into a short, 2 mm point between the tips. *Lemmas* (L) slightly longer than G<sub>2</sub>, membranous, 2-pointed, distinctively 3-awned, with 1 awn arising from the central nerve between the points at the tip, the other 2 from the lateral margins and slightly shorter, the awns longer than the body of the lemma and rough, the margins and the back of the keel with numerous stiff hairs. *Paleas* (P) much shorter, 2-nerved, membranous. Anthers 3, 0.4 mm long.

This species is not common though it is widespread in the drier parts of southern Queensland, where it is found growing on red or granitic, sandy soil. It is of little value as a forage species.

#### REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1910; Gardner (1952), p. 85; Lazarides (1970), p. 245; Black (1978), p. 202; Jessop (1981), p. 443.

#### KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in southern Queensland.