



# URANTHOECIUM TRUNCATUM

## Flat-stem Grass

An erect, more or less tufted, annual grass up to 40 cm tall. *Culms* erect or slightly prostrate at the base, branching at the nodes, particularly in the lower part, smooth, hairless, shining, slightly flattened, sometimes purplish towards the base. *Nodes* about 3, smooth, hairless or slightly hairy, pigmented. *Leaves* on the culms green to straw-coloured. *Leaf sheaths* rather loose, striate, smooth, papery, shorter than the internodes. *Ligule* a short membranous rim, fringed with dense, 1 mm-long hairs, tufted on the margins. *Leaf blades* flat, smooth or sometimes slightly rough on the upper surface, 5–15 cm long and up to 4 mm wide, tapering gradually to a fine point.

*Inflorescence* a spike-like panicle, 7–15 cm long, with strongly contracted, widely spaced branches of 2–4 sessile spikelets, at first partly enclosed within the uppermost leaf sheath, the main axis flattened and ribbed, green on the back and straw-coloured on the front, the contracted branches likewise flattened, alternating along the main axis, at maturity disarticulating at the joints of the main axis and the rhachis. *Spikelets* (S) sessile on the rhachis, similar, except the terminal one may be rudimentary, about 10 mm long, pointed, at maturity falling entire together with the associated axis and rhachis joint, often purplish. *Florets* 2, the lower one sterile, the upper one bisexual. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) very dissimilar, rigid, truncate, hairless, smooth; the lower glume (G<sub>1</sub>) 3–4 mm long, oblong, 7-nerved, the lateral nerves together and joined to the mid-nerve by cross-nerves; the upper (G<sub>2</sub>) broader, about 5 mm long, tapering from the base to a truncate tip, 7-nerved, with the 3 lateral nerves together and cross-veined near the tip, slightly 2-keeled along the lateral nerves. *Lemmas* (L<sub>1</sub>, L<sub>2</sub>) dissimilar; L<sub>1</sub> the length of the spikelet, tapering from the base to a fine, slightly rough point, 7–9-nerved, the lateral nerves not distinct because of the thickening between the nerves, leaving a membranous centrepiece about the faint mid-nerve, flattened and slightly concave on the back, 2-keeled towards the tip; L<sub>2</sub> about  $\frac{2}{3}$  L<sub>1</sub>, 5-nerved, smooth, shining, hardened, very rounded on the back, tapering to a fine, slightly rough point. *Paleas* (P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>) very dissimilar; P<sub>1</sub> about  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of L<sub>1</sub>, 2-nerved and strongly 2-keeled, membranous between the keels, but thickened along the keels, especially towards the tip, convex on the back; P<sub>2</sub> about  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of L<sub>2</sub>, hardened, 2-nerved and 2-keeled, smooth and shining, flat on the back between the keels, slightly two-pointed at the tip. *Anthers* 3, 0.5 mm long.

This is a widespread but ephemeral western grass; it is not very common, but may be locally abundant, especially following flooding.

### REFERENCES

Blake (1948b), p. 160; Lazarides (1970), pp. 246–47; Vickery (1975), pp. 263–64; Jessop (1981), p. 483.

### KEY TO SPECIES

This is a monospecific endemic Australian genus.