



## WHITEOCHLOA AIROIDES

A usually tufted, perennial tussock grass, 45–100 cm tall. *Culms* simple or sparingly branched, smooth, slender, the culm bases persistent and woolly. *Nodes* 3–4, shortly hairy, pigmented. *Leaves* green, mostly on the culms. *Leaf sheaths* shorter than the internodes, loose, rounded, striate, persistent, with or without hairs, smooth to rough. *Ligule* a short, membranous, 0.5 mm rim fringed by short hairs, with longer hairs laterally and above. *Leaf blades* long and slender, 10–24 cm by 2–5 mm, striate, rough down the margins and mid-vein on the back, the basal ones often quite hairy.

*Inflorescence* a panicle up to 25 cm long, either open (up to 10 cm wide) or contracted (1–2 cm wide), frequently interrupted, the branches slender. *Spikelets* (S) solitary, laterally compressed, on slender pedicels, all similar, 3–4 mm long, at maturity falling entire. *Florets* 2, the lower male, the upper bisexual. *Glumes* (G<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>2</sub>) papery, very unequal, more or less pointed at the tip; the lower glume (G<sub>1</sub>) about 1/3 the spikelet length, very broad at the base and rounded, though slightly keeled on the back of the mid-nerve, 3–5-nerved; the upper (G<sub>2</sub>) the length of the spikelet, rounded on the back below and becoming keeled along the mid-nerve towards the tip, 5–7-nerved. *Lemmas* (L<sub>1</sub>, L<sub>2</sub>) very dissimilar; L<sub>1</sub> papery like the glumes, 5-nerved, rounded below, but keeled towards the tip on the back, almost the length of the spikelet; L<sub>2</sub> hardened, smooth and shining, faintly 3-nerved, rounded on the back. *Paleas* (P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>) very dissimilar; P<sub>1</sub> membranous, 2-nerved and strongly 2-keeled, flat on the back between the winged keels, the wings infolding the floret; P<sub>2</sub> hardened, smooth and shining like L<sub>2</sub>, faintly 2-nerved, 2-keeled and flat on the back between the keels, slightly shorter than L<sub>2</sub>. *Anthers* 3 in each floret, 2 mm long in the lower floret and 1.5 mm in the upper floret, yellow.

The grass occurs only in the north of the region, where it is scattered or locally common in a variety of locations from coastal sandy areas to river levees, flood-plains, fringing wet areas and disturbed sites. It is common on sandy alluvial and lateritic soils and sometimes may dominate on the floor of woodlands (Lazarides, 1978).

### REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1829 (as *Panicum airoides*); Lazarides (1978), pp. 73–77.

### KEY TO SPECIES

This is the only species recorded for Queensland.