



X3.9



# ZOYSIA MACRANTHA

## Prickly Couch

A strongly rhizomatous grass, vigorously creeping in the sand of the foreshore and dunes, rarely more than 25 cm high. *Culms* more or less erect, smooth and hairless, straw-coloured below, striate, often severally branched at the nodes. *Nodes* mostly concealed within the leaf sheaths in the upper part, exerted below. *Leaves* mostly on the culms or clustered at the rooted nodes. *Leaf sheaths* smooth and striate, rather loose on the culm, green above but straw-coloured below, persisting at the lower nodes, and in the underground parts reduced to papery scales. *Ligule* a very narrow rim of short hairs, some longer hairs about the orifice. *Leaf blades* rigid, flat or often rolled inwards from the margins, about 2 mm wide and up to 10 cm long, gradually tapering to a pungent point, smooth and hairless.

*Inflorescence* a narrow spike-like raceme, up to 5 cm long, bearing pedicelled spikelets singly or in clusters of 2 or more, the axis rather flattened, striate and zig-zag with the spikelets closely adpressed to it, the pedicels also flattened and striate, up to 2 mm long. *Spikelets* (S) 4 mm long, solitary, all similar, flattened laterally, dark purplish-brown in colour, smooth and shining, falling entire from the pedicel at maturity. *Floret* 1, bisexual. *Glumes*, only the upper ( $G_2$ ) present, 4 mm long, tough, smooth, shining, purplish-brown in colour on one side, strongly laterally flattened so that the floret is entirely enclosed by the glume with the margins meeting and more or less stuck together, 1-nerved. *Lemma* (L) 3.5 mm long, thinly membranous, narrow, rounded at the tip, but with a short point extending beyond the mid-vein. *Palea* (P) 3 mm long, very narrow, blunt, very thinly membranous, without nerves. *Anthers* 3, 3 mm long.

This is a very desirable grass, particularly for foreshore and sand-dune stabilization, but also it is readily eaten by stock and can be used for grazing in sandy coastal areas on the margins of brackish water.

### REFERENCES

Bailey (1902), p. 1847; Willis (1970), p. 154; Beadle *et al.* (1972), p. 659; Vickery (1975), pp. 302-3.

### KEY TO SPECIES

Only one species occurs in southern Queensland.