

**111. CENTOTHECA** Desvaux, Nouv. Bull. Sci. Soc. Philom. Paris 2: 189. 1810  
[“*Centosteca*”], nom. et orth. cons.

假淡竹叶属 jia dan zhu ye shu

Annual or perennial. Leaf blades broadly linear to lanceolate, narrowed at base. Inflorescence a panicle or the primary branches reduced to racemes. Spikelets breaking up above glumes, florets 1–4, rachilla extension usually bearing a rudimentary floret, upper florets decreasing in size and often with reflexed bristles; glumes unequal, separated by a short internode, 3–5-veined, dorsally keeled, apex acute or acuminate; lemmas dorsally rounded, 5–7-veined, apex acute or apiculate; palea narrower, equal to or shorter than its lemma, keels ciliate or glabrous. Stamens 2 or 3.

Three or four species: W Africa, tropical Asia, Australia (Queensland), Pacific islands; one species in China.

**1. Centotheca lappacea** (Linnaeus) Desvaux, Nouv. Bull. Sci. Soc. Philom. Paris 2: 189. 1810.

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*Cenchrus lappaceus* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl., ed. 2, 2: 1488. 1763; *Centotheca lappacea* subsp. *inermis* (Rendle) T. Koyama; *C. lappacea* var. *inermis* Rendle; *C. lappacea* var. *longilamina* (Ohwi) Bor; *C. latifolia* Trinius, nom. illeg. superfl.; *C. longilamina* Ohwi; *Festuca latifolia* Roth (1821), not Candolle (1813); *Holcus latifolius* Osbeck; *Melica lappacea* (Linnaeus) Raspail; *Poa latifolia* G. Forster; *Uniola lappacea* (Linnaeus) Trinius.

Perennial from a knotty base. Culms solitary or loosely tufted, erect, smooth, 40–100 cm tall, 4–7-noded. Leaf sheaths smooth or ciliate along one margin; leaf blades broadly lanceolate, 5–15 × 1–2.5 cm, abaxial surface glabrous with cross veins, adaxial surface glabrous or loosely hispidulous, apex long-attenuate; ligule 1–1.5 mm. Panicle open, 12–25 cm, primary branches up to 15 cm, the spikelets clustered around them; pedicels 2.5–3 mm, slender, pubescent. Spikelets ca. 5 mm, florets 2–3; glumes 3–5-veined; lower glume 2–2.5 mm, acute; upper glume 3–3.5 mm, mucronate; lowest lemma ca. 4 mm, 7-

veined, glabrous, apex apiculate; second and third lemmas 3–3.5 mm, coarsely setose with tubercle-based, reflexing bristles near upper margins; paleas firm, ciliolate along keels. Caryopsis ellipsoid, 1–1.2 mm. Fl. and fr. Jun–Oct.  $2n = 24$ .

Forest margins, shady roadsides and other moist shady places. Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Jiangxi, Taiwan, Yunnan [Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; W tropical Africa, Australia (Queensland), Pacific Islands (Polynesia)].

This is an excellent fodder grass. The stiff bristles on the spikelets, which reflex at maturity, aid dispersal by catching in the fur of passing animals.

In 1820 Trinius published the name *Centotheca latifolia*, but not as a new combination based on *Holcus latifolius* Osbeck (1757), which should have been the basionym as the earliest legitimate name for the species, but as a replacement name for *Cenchrus lappaceus* Linnaeus (1763). The well-known combination *Centotheca latifolia* is therefore illegitimate, because it was nomenclaturally superfluous when published, and the epithet of *H. latifolius* cannot be transferred to *Centotheca* without creating a later homonym, which would be illegitimate. The earliest legitimate name with an epithet available in *Centotheca* is *Cenchrus lappaceus*, and hence Desvaux's combination is the correct name for this species.

