

134. DESMOSTACHYA (Stapf) Stapf in Dyer, Fl. Cap. 7: 316. 1898.

羽穗草属 yu sui cao shu

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Eragrostis sect. *Desmostachya* Stapf in J. D. Hooker, Fl. Brit. India 7: 324. 1896 ["1897"].

Perennials, rhizomatous. Leaf blades linear or inrolled; ligule a line of hairs. Inflorescence a narrow spikelike panicle composed of numerous, short, 1-sided racemes of sessile, closely imbricate, biseriate spikelets on a long central axis. Spikelets falling entire, strongly laterally compressed, florets several to many; glumes shorter than lemmas, unequal, membranous, 1-veined, lightly keeled, acute; lemmas papery to leathery, 3-veined with lateral veins evanescent upward, glabrous, keeled, acute; palea equal to or slightly shorter than lemma. Caryopsis ovoid, trigonous.

One species: from N Africa through SW Asia and India to China and continental SE Asia.

This genus is closely related to *Eragrostis*, differing mainly by its inflorescence structure.

1. *Desmostachya bipinnata* (Linnaeus) Stapf in Dyer, Fl. Cap. 7: 632. 1900.

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Briza bipinnata Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., ed. 10, 2: 875. 1759;
Eragrostis cynosuroides (Retzius) P. Beauvois; *Poa cynosuroides* Retzius.

Coarse perennial forming large leafy tussocks, also with widely spreading scaly rhizomes. Culms rigid, branched at base and covered with leathery yellowish sheaths, 80–100 cm tall, ca. 7 mm in diam. Leaf sheaths glabrous; leaf blades flat or inrolled, tough, 18–30 × 0.4–1 cm, adaxial surface and margins

scabrid, abaxial surface rather smooth, apex long acuminate; ligule ca. 0.3 mm. Inflorescence 20–60 × 2–3 cm; racemes ascending or spreading, crowded or spaced, 0.5–3.5 cm; main axis and rachis hispidulous. Spikelets elliptic or elliptic-oblong, 2–10 mm, stramineous or purplish, florets 3–10; glumes ovate-lanceolate; lower glume 0.7–1.5 mm; upper glume 1.1–2 mm; lemmas ovate-lanceolate, 1.8–2.7 mm; palea keels scabrid. Fl. and fr. summer.

Arid regions with water table near surface. Hainan [Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam; N and NE Africa, SW Asia, Australia (Cocos Islands)].

This is a tough grass of arid regions, useful as a soil binder.

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