

145. **MICROCHLOA** R. Brown, Prodr. 208. 1810.

小草属 xiao cao shu

Sun Bixing (孙必兴 Sun Bi-sin); Sylvia M. Phillips

Perennial, or sometimes annual. Culms tufted, slender. Leaves mostly basal; leaf blades narrow, often convolute; ligule short, ciliate from a membranous base. Inflorescence a single raceme; raceme unilateral, very slender, scarcely wider than culm, falcate when dry; spikelets sessile, biseriate, closely imbricate; rachis crescentic in section. Spikelets small, lightly dorsally compressed, narrowly subterete, floret 1 without prolonged rachilla or sterile florets, disarticulating above glumes; glumes subequal, as long as spikelet and enclosing floret, firmly membranous, 1-veined, margins infolding, apex acute, both or only upper deciduous; lower glume keeled; upper glume rounded; lemma shorter than glumes, ovate, keeled, thinly membranous, 3-veined, ciliate on veins, apex acute or minutely emarginate and mucronulate; palea subequal to lemma, keels ciliate. Caryopsis ellipsoid. $x = 10$.

Six species: throughout the tropics; one species in China.

1. *Microchloa indica* (Linnaeus f.) P. Beauvois, Ess. Agrostogr., Expl. Pl., 13. 1812.

小草 xiao cao

Perennial, or sometimes annual. Culms tufted, usually densely, very slender, wiry, up to 60 cm tall. Basal leaf sheaths disintegrating into fibers; leaf blades very narrowly linear, 1–6 cm, ca. 1 mm wide, adaxial surface usually with long scattered hairs, margins scabrous, midrib and submarginal veins thickened, apex obtuse; ligule 0.1–0.3 mm. Raceme (3–)5–20 (–25) cm, falcate when dry; rachis shortly ciliate on margins or glabrous. Spikelets light green, lanceolate, 1.6–4 mm, acute; lower glume slightly asymmetrical; lemma 1.5–3 mm, mucronate. Caryopsis ca. 1 mm. Fl. and fr. Jul–Oct.

Dry open places, on very stony soils, rock crevices; sea level to 2500 m. Guangdong, Hainan, Yunnan [throughout the tropics].

- 1a. Plants up to 25 cm tall; raceme 0.8–1 mm wide; spikelets 1.6–3 mm 1a. var. *indica*
1b. Plants 25–60 cm tall; raceme 1–1.5 mm wide; spikelets 2.5–4 mm 1b. var. *kunthii*

1a. *Microchloa indica* var. *indica*

小草(原变种) xiao cao (yuan bian zhong)

Nardus indica Linnaeus f., Suppl. Pl., 105. 1782 [“1781”].

Plants sometimes annual, delicate, up to 25 cm tall. Raceme (3–)5–8(–10) cm, 0.8–1 mm wide. Spikelets 1.6–3 mm.

Dry open places inland, sandy places near the sea; sea level to 2500 m. Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Yunnan [throughout the tropics; probably introduced in America, rare in Australia].

1b. *Microchloa indica* var. *kunthii* (Desvaux) B. S. Sun & Z. H. Hu, Fl. Reipubl. Popularis Sin. 10(1): 88. 1990.

长穗小草 chang sui xiao cao

Microchloa kunthii Desvaux, Mém. Soc. Agric. Angers 1: 179. 1831.

Plants perennial, slightly stouter, base often fibrous, 22–60 cm tall. Raceme (7–)15–20(–25) cm, 1–1.5 mm wide. Spikelets 2.5–4 mm.

Dry open places, especially in rock fissures. Yunnan [throughout the tropics, except Australia].

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