

Poaceae

Microlaena stipoides

weeping grass



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ETYMOLOGY

(my-cro-LEEN-a) Greek mikros = small + laina = cloak; alluding to the 2 minute outer glumes; The species stipoides = with a stipe or stalk.

LIFEFORM

Grass 10-15 cm

OCCURS

Cape York Qld to NSW, Vic, Tas, NT, SA, WA (NZ, NG, Asia, Mal)

QLD DISTRICT

SBurnett, Cook, Darling Downs, Leichhardt, Moreton, North/South Kennedy, Port Curtis, Wide Bay

HABITAT

Shady damp forests, around buildings

LEAVES

Blades, 4-15 cm x 3-5 mm, linear to narrow-lanceolate, hairless flat, rolled in bud, glabrous or sparsely hairy on lower surface, midvein prominent, bases expanded into lobes: Ligule short membranous rim fringed collar <0.5 mm with hairs near margins.

FLOWERS

Raceme, 5-20 cm, drooping with widely-spaced, 2 cm awns long-pointed; Spikelets (1 fertile + 2 sterile) finely stalked. **Flowering Time** Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb, March

FRUIT

Glumes 1 mm, 1-nerved. Sterile lemmas rigid rough along the keel, 3-7 nerved, both tapering into long, slender, scabrid awn. Fertile lemma shorter, awnless but acutely pointed, 5-7nerved, keeled with short spines on the upper half, **Fruiting Times** Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb, March, April

ROOTS

Tufted scaly rhizomes

STEM

Slender, tufted perennials with arched flower stem.

ETHNOBOTANY

Valuable for maintaining stock in dry times. Produces high quality feed can be made into good hay containing 10-27% crude protein; highly digestible 55-80%; All year round, green growth; Under close grazing if forms a dense tuft.

TOLERANCE

Shade, Drought tolerant.

WILDLIFE

Kangaroos, Wallabies are nature's lawn mowers,

INSECTS

Glyphipterix chrysoplanetis (Moth)

BIRD

Seeds eaten by Peaceful Dove, Bar-shoulder Dove, Finches (Neil, J.2002)

BUTTERFLY

Caterpillar food for Dispar Skipper, Common Brown, Spotted Brown, Common Silver Xenica, White Grass-dart. *Oreixenica lathonella*, Ringed Xenica, *Geitoneura acantha*, *Heteronympha paradelpha* Spotted Brown, *Toxidia doubledayi*, *Taractrocera papyria*, *Ocybadistes hypomeloma*, *Charaxes latona* Orange Emperor, *Geitoneura kulgii* Marbled Xenica, *Oreixenica lathoniella*

COMMENTS

Total germination approx. 25 days, typical rate 87 per gram of seed; Water table mostly low, moisture supply intermittent, non-saline.