

Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers.

Family:
Poaceae

Persoon, C.H. (1805) *Synopsis Plantarum seu Encheridium Botanicum* 1: 85.

Common name:
Couch grass; Bermuda grass

Stem

Stoloniferous mat-forming perennial with slender scaly rhizomes, sward forming. Culms slender, 10-40 cm tall.

Leaves

Leaf sheaths bearded at mouth, otherwise glabrous or thinly pilose; leaf blades linear, 1-12 cm and 4 mm wide, glabrous, apex subacute; ligule a narrow ciliated membrane with long hairs, up to 1 mm with a few long hairs on the shoulders.

Flowers

Racemes digitate, (2-)3-6, 2-6 cm, straight or gently curved, spreading; spikelets overlapping by 1/2-2/3 their length. Spikelets 2-2.7 mm long with the rachilla extension ca. 1 mm; glumes linear-lanceolate, often purplish, usually more than half as long as floret, 1.5-2 mm, with a scabrous keel; lemma as long as the spikelet, silky villous along keel otherwise glabrous or lateral veins thinly villous, apex subacute; palea glabrous, keels scaberulous.

Fruit

Caryopsis subterete, scarcely laterally compressed.

Seedlings

Features not available.

Distribution and Ecology

A common plant in all Australian States, occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ and CEQ and widespread throughout Australia. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 1150 m. Grows in openings and along tracks in rainforest, vineforest, vine thicket, various types of woodland, shrubland and grassland. Cosmopolitan species.

Natural History & Notes

Causes HCN poisoning in stock (Webb 1948).

Foodplant for the instar larvae of the Yellow-banded Dart and the Dinky Ringlet butterflies (Common & Waterhouse 1948).

Used extensively as a lawn and pasture grass (Lazarides 1972).

Synonyms

Panicum dactylon L., *Species Plantarum* 1: 58(1753), Type: Habitat in Europa australi.

RFK Code

4256



Herbarium specimen. © DERM

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