

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Cynodon dactylon – BERMUDA GRASS [Poaceae]

Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers., BERMUDA GRASS. Perennial herb, clonal, stolon-producing, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, typically several-stemmed and cespitose at each rooted node, mat-forming, prostrate or decumbent with ascending shoots, if reproductive terminating in an erect, umbel-like compound inflorescence, < 10–50 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves; stolons slender, with internodes often 20–30 mm long but sometimes having 2 extra leaves, thus forming an ascending shoot every third node, when young nodes bearing green leaves; rhizome ca. 2 mm diameter, whitish bearing stiff, red-purple or ivory sheathing scales (= leaf sheaths), the sheaths 10–30 mm long with short acute blades 1–2 mm long. **Stems (culms):** cylindrical, tough, often dark green, faintly striped; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple and sheathing; sheath open, cylindrical, membranous on margins, without lobes (auricles) at top, persistent, collar with colorless hairs to 3 mm long; ligule of erect hairs 0.2–0.5 mm long; blade linear to narrowly triangular-linear, (10–)25–130 × 2–4.5 mm, the widest at the base, flat, minutely toothed on margins for most of length and sometimes with scattered long hairs, parallel-veined with slightly raised principal veins on lower surface but lacking a well-defined midrib, glabrous or sometimes sparsely pilose on upper surface, **Inflorescence:** spikelets in umbel-like panicle, terminal, of 4–5(–7) ascending later spreading, spikelike branches, the branches (11–)25–67 mm long, 1-sided (upper side) with 2 rows of overlapping, spikelet with 1 floret, bracteate, lacking awns; inflorescence axis erect, slender, 125–140 × 0.5–1.1 mm; branches typically unequal, triangular in \times -section, winged and sometimes \pm scalloped on lateral (upper 2) edges, green aging to reddish purple, typically pubescent at base; peduncle subtending spikelet \pm 1 mm long. **Spikelet:** with bisexual floret, strongly compressed side-to-side, 2–3 mm long; rachilla extended above palea and sometimes bearing a small, vestigial floret, breaking above glumes; **glumes** 2, unequal, narrowly lanceolate, lower glume 1–1.7 mm long and upper glume 1.5–2 mm long, lower glume < upper glume, keeled, green and minutely toothed along keel, membranous on margins, the margins initially purplish aging to pale transparent green or ivory white; **lemma** \pm broadly ovate when spread open, each side semi-lanceolate, 1.8–2.2 × 0.6–0.8 mm, > glumes, keeled, pale yellowish green with 3 green veins and purplish along marginal veins when young, \pm acute to acuminate but tip minutely truncate with midvein minutely extended, short-hairy along keel, aging reddish purple; **palea** 1.6–1.9 × 0.25 mm, < lemma, weakly 2-keeled, 2-veined, whitish with membranous margins and green veins aging reddish purple, glabrous. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, \pm fan-shaped to inversely trapezoid, \pm 0.2 × 0.3 mm, at anthesis fleshy and plump but later collapsed, colorless; **stamens** 3, free; filaments exerted, threadlike, \pm 1.5 mm long, whitish; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, elongate \pm X-shaped, 1.2–1.4 mm long, pale yellow or light greenish yellow to reddish yellow, sometimes turning rose-purple at tips and along suture, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen nearly colorless to pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, \pm 0.5 mm long, green, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, 0.9–1.3 mm long, whitish and glabrous at base, stigmatic above midpoint; stigmas laterally exerted between lemma and palea, whitish to pink or red-purple, densely long-papillate. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis),

ellipsoid, 0.9–1 × 0.3 mm, amber with blackish base; enclosed in purplish lemma and palea.

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