

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Eragrostis intermedia – PLAINS LOVEGRASS [Poaceae]

Eragrostis intermedia A. S. Hitchc., PLAINS LOVEGRASS. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, not rosetted, fibrous-rooted, densely tufted and many-stemmed at base, in range to 80 cm tall; shoots with basal and cauline leaves having sheaths concealing nodes and internodes, lacking glands, with some long hairs at top of sheath and base of blade; rhizome knotty, somewhat concealed by many shoots and axillary buds at consecutive belowground nodes. **Stems:** cylindric, < 1.5 mm diameter, nodes and internodes fully hidden with overlapping sheaths, smooth, glabrous, lacking glands. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll open, membranous, flat and strongly 2-keeled, obtuse-triangular, ca. 3 mm long, whitish, minutely ciliate along keels; sheath open, basal leaves with triangular sheath with or without vestigial blade, faintly low-ridged, > internode and overlapping, other sheaths, in range margins without hairs, lacking lobes (auricles) at top; ligule densely ciliate, 0.3–0.55 mm long; collar with long hairs to 4 mm long on lower (outer) surface, hairs lacking swollen cell at base (not pustulate); blade linear, in range 350–630 × 3.2–7 mm (diminished or absent on the lowest leaves), flat drying inrolled, entire, parallel-veined, upper surface finely ridged and scabrous along veins, often with several straight hairs at base close to collar, the hairs to 6 mm long, lower surface with veins slightly raised, glabrous, not scabrous. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in open, terminal paniclelike array of many widely spreading, thin and flexible primary branches and diverging branchlets, branchlets with slender axes often gathered at base by sheath of flag leaf, the longest branch 150+ mm long, spikelets widely spaced with several–15 per primary branch, racemelike branchlets with 1–4 spikelets terminal on ultimate axes (“pedicels”), spikelets in range with 2–9 bisexual florets, bracteate, not glandular, lacking awns; principal axis straight, typically 4-sided and solid with scabrous lines, ca. 0.5 mm diameter, green, with primary branches commonly widely spreading and alternate but upper sets sometimes appearing 3-whorled, each spreading primary branch with pulvinus in axil, the pulvinus light green, each axil + pulvinus with a tuft of straight hairs, the hairs to 4 mm long and not pustulate, axis of primary branch ca. 0.25 mm thick, green, and scabrous; ultimate axis straight to wavy, several–20+ mm long always > spikelet, ± 0.1 mm diameter, scabrous. **Spikelet:** mostly lanceolate in outline and compressed side-to-side, in range at maturity 4–7 × 1.5–1.7 mm (young spikelets < 1 mm across), breaking below each lemma fertile floret after shedding glumes and finally shedding paleas of spikelet; **glumes** 2, subequal, keeled, the keel scabrous, 1-veined, in range lower glume 1.2–1.4 mm long and upper glume broader and 1.5–1.7 mm long, lower glume < upper glume, keel greenish; rachilla segments ca. 0.6 mm long, light green; **lemma** membranous, acute-ovate keeled (of the lowest floret) and rounded on back, 1.8–2.2 mm long, > glume, 3-veined with pair of lateral veins inconspicuous, keel scabrous and midvein of other lemmas often scabrous at least on upper 1/3, grayish-green (olivaceous) or appearing red-purple tinged; **palea** conspicuously 2-keeled obtuse and short-fringed at top, 2-veined, ca. 1.3 mm long and < lemma, colorless (hyaline), keels short-ciliate. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, ovate, ca. 0.3 mm long, colorless; **stamens** 3, free; filaments 1 mm long, initially clear aging threadlike and white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, in range 0.5–0.7 mm long, light red-purple or with white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1, 1.3–1.5 mm long; ovary superior, spheroid to ovoid, 0.3–0.45 × 0.25–0.3 mm long, translucent, glabrous, 1-

chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, widely spaced at top of ovary, lower portion threadlike and ± 0.4 mm long and upper portion bottlebrushlike, colorless. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), fusiform-oblong, in range 0.6–0.85 mm long, with a deep groove on 1 side (adaxial).

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