

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Festuca myuros – FOXTAIL FESCUE, RATTAIL FESCUE, RATTAIL SIXWEEKS GRASS [Poaceae]

Festuca myuros L. (syn. *Vulpia myuros*), FOXTAIL FESCUE, RATTAIL FESCUE, RATTAIL SIXWEEKS GRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted, 1–several-stemmed at base, erect, 20–55(–70) cm tall; shoots essentially glabrous. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, slender, < 1 mm diameter, tough, whitish, glabrous. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, with several conspicuously raised veins, glabrous, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule truncate, ± 0.2–0.3 mm long, minutely and jaggedly ciliate, projecting upward on 1 or both surfaces; blade linear, 25–150 × ca. 1 mm, with inrolled margins (flat), parallel-veined, upper surface inconspicuously puberulent. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal racemes or panicles, panicle 40–150(–250) mm long, of alternate distichous (strongly 2-ranked), ascending, sessile or short-stalked, overlapping, awned spikelets, spikelet with 3–4(–6) florets having terminal floret commonly sterile, bracteate, awned; axes slender and 3-angled, short-scabrous along edges. **Spikelet:** ellipsoid and somewhat compressed, 5.5–11(–23) mm long, breaking above glumes and between florets; rachilla strongly flattened with internodes ca. 1 mm long, minutely scabrous; **glumes** 2, unequal, narrowly lanceolate to lanceolate, 0.7–2 mm long (lower glume) and 2.5–5.5 mm long (upper glume), < the lowest lemma, membranous on margins, glabrous; **lemma** awned, narrowly lanceolate, 4.5–7 mm long, outer surface minutely scabrous, glabrous (sometimes long-ciliate on margins approaching tip), obscurely 5-veined, the awn terminal, straight, 5–16 mm long, light-colored; **palea** flat with infolded margins, 4.5–5.5(–6) mm long, membranous with 2 green veins, veins minutely toothed approaching tip and extended as 2 minute points. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, acute, 0.5 mm long, fringed or with a short acute lobe at base, translucent; **stamens** 1, free, included (partially exerted); filament threadlike, 2 mm long, translucent; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, linear, 0.4 mm long, purplish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pinkish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, compressed-obovoid, 0.6–0.8 mm long, glossy greenish white, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, included, 1 mm long; stigmas translucent. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), dispersed tightly enclosed in awned floret with persistent rachilla segment, sometimes floret also dispersed retaining a terminal sterile floret; achene narrowly fusiform, 3–5 × 0.4–0.5 mm, with deep longitudinal groove next to and typically trapping palea, glabrous; lemma to 7 mm long, minutely scabrous base to tip or mostly above midpoint, sometimes ciliate with hairs projected and visible on floret along groove, the awn ± straight to slightly curved, never twisted.

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