

**Vascular Plants of Williamson County**  
*Leersia oryzoides* – RICE CUTGRASS [Poaceae]

*Leersia oryzoides* (L.) Swartz, RICE CUTGRASS. Aquatic perennial herb, clonal, stolon-bearing, fibrous-rooted, not rosetted, in dense clones with many shoots arising from stolons and unbranched above stolon, principal shoots 100+ cm long procumbent and prostrate to decumbent and leaning in dense but having flowering portions erect to 50 cm tall; shoots with cauline leaves, axis sometimes strongly bent (geniculate) at densely short-hirsute, conspicuously swollen node to 5 mm long, foliage and especially axes conspicuously scabrous; stolon (termed rhizomes by other authors) slender, < 1.5 mm diameter, internodes 20+ mm long, at each node with an axillary bud or shoot, reduced leaf, and prophyll, the leaf = appressed, open sheath ca. 15 mm long, white, with a white diminutive, long-acuminate blade to 6 × 1 mm, the sheath split by growth of axillary bud; adventitious roots along horizontal stems. **Stems:** cylindric, hidden by sheaths 2 mm diameter and swollen nodes to 5 mm diameter, internodes glabrous and exposed nodes densely short-hirsute. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll at each node of stolon, membranous, closed base nearly to tip, 2-keeled not flattened (plump), to 3 × 1.5 mm, sparsely short-ciliate along keels above midpoint; sheath open but tightly sealed around stems with scabrous teeth, stem hidden by sheaths > internodes, the teeth in vertical rows between veins, veins not raised, green, not lobed at top (auricles); ligule membranous, somewhat oblique, in range 2–3.5 mm long, margins with minute hairs; collar densely short-hirsute on lower surface; blade linear, in range < 200–280 × 10–15 mm, with minute scabrous teeth on margins, acuminate at tip, parallel-veined with midrib raised on lower surface and principal veins raised on upper surface, scabrous essentially on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicle, fully expanded open with flexible, spreading to ascending, racemelike lateral branches and lower branches often tufted where confined by flag leaf sheath, panicle roughly ovoid in range to 210 × 130 mm, with straight primary axis having primary lateral branches to 80 mm long, at base with a ring of colorless hairs around the base of pulvinus, lacking spikelet on lower half of each primary branch, the longest branch with secondary branchlets having < 10 spikelets, axes grooved on 1 side, with small scabrous teeth, secondary branchlet with pulvinus at base, on fertile portion stalks spaced ca 2 mm apart and spikelets shinglelike on 1 side of branch or branchlet overlapping more than 1/2; flowers chasmogamous above midpoint of panicle ranging to cleistogamous within sheath of flag leaf; stalks of spikelet ascending and spreading, 0.35–0.4 mm long, minutely scabrous. **Spikelet:** elliptic in outline strongly flattened side-to-side, of chasmogamous flower slightly gapped at tip, of cleistogamous flower never gapped at tip, mostly ca. 4.5 × 1.7 mm, tough and translucent with green stripes, 2 edges short-hispid (scabrous), other bract margins and surfaces weakly scabrous, breaking at base of spikelet; **glumes** absent; **lemma** keeled and folded flat, with 5 green veins; **palea** keeled and folded flat, as long as lemma. **Chasmogamous flower:** **perianth (ledicules)** 2, fan-shaped, 0.35–0.4 mm long, colorless; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, 3–4 mm long, colorless; anthers exerted at top of spikelet, dorsifixed, dithecal, 1.5–2.3 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, ca. 0.35 × 0.2 mm, tinged greenish, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, touching at base, ca. 1.5 mm long, axis colorless, 1 exerted ca. 1 mm from base of spikelet, exerted portion stigmatic and branched (treelike), to 1.2 mm long, pale purplish red. **Cleistogamous**

**flower:** on lower portion of panicle; **perianth (lodicules)** obscure; **stamens** 3, free, included; filaments to 1 mm long, colorless; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, in range 0.8–1 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1, included, ; ovary superior, ovoid, ca. 0.25 mm long, colorless, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style < 1 mm long, colorless, stigmatic portion weakly branched. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), dispersed within spikelet, oval or obovate in outline compressed front-to-back, 1.5–2.5 mm long + persistent style base; spikelet flat with scabrous edges, in range ca. 4.5 × 1.7 mm, with several stripes.

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