

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Leptochloa panicea subsp. *mucronata* – RED SPANGLETOP, MISSISSIPPI SPRANGLETOP, SLENDER GRASS [Poaceae]

Leptochloa panicea (Retz) Ohwi subsp. *mucronata* (Michx.) Nowack (includes here some characteristics of subsp. *brachiata*), RED SPANGLETOP, MISSISSIPPI SPRANGLETOP, SLENDER GRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted, several–many-stemmed at base, with ascending to suberect principal branches and some lateral branches below midplant, with terminal panicle in range < 50–100 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, foliage margins scabrous, especially sheaths pilose and some hairs with enlarged bases (pustulate); adventitious roots at nodes and only belowground. **Stems:** cylindrical, < 3 mm diameter, not ridged, glabrous; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath, without stipules; prophyll 2-keeled and unequally 2-forked at tip, to 45 × 2.5 mm, membranous with green vein to each tip, tips ca. 4 mm long; sheath open, ridged and midrib somewhat keeled, < internode, with wide membranous margin overlapping to midpoint, red-purple at base, long-hairy along margin above midpoint with long fine hairs with enlarged bases (pustulate), pilose at top of sheath, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule membranous ± truncate and finely cut, to 2 mm long, brownish; collar to 3 mm long, red-purple; blade linear to long-acuminate strap-shaped, 60–260+ × < 4–10+ mm, the widest near midblade, minutely toothed on margins, long-tapered to tip, parallel-veined and finely ribbed on both surfaces and midrib enlarged on lower surface, lower surface scabrous. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, terminal panicle with 1 order of branching, 1 lateral branch per node, often with 60+ widely spreading lateral branches, = upper 1/2 of plant to 350 mm long, lower inflorescence initially with sheath of flag leaf, branches spaced 1–7 mm apart, straight, < 60–120 mm long, each with axillary, granular pulvinus on upper side of branch, racemelike and somewhat planed, spikelets to 60+ arising on lower 2 sides of branch axis, spikelet with 2–3 bisexual florets, lacking awns; **spikelet** inversely triangular and compressed side-to-side, ca. 1.5 mm across, axis ± 3-sided and 3-angled, scabrous, with short stalk for each spikelet straight or twisted, breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, unequal, keeled, acuminate to scarcely mucronate, > lemma of adjacent lemma, with inconspicuous microhairs, lower glume narrowly lanceolate, 1.9–2.7 mm long, upper glume lanceolate, 2 mm long, 1-veined, membranous with minutely scabrous, green keel, upper glume often purplish; **lemma** 3-veined, < 2 mm long, veins green, with inconspicuous soft hairs long keel and lateral veins above midpoint, surface minutely textured; **palea** membranous and 2-keeled, < lemma, keels green. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral; **perianth (lodicules)** 3, ca. 0.1 mm long, colorless; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, ca. 1 mm long; anthers exerted from midpoint of lemma, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.25–0.35 mm long, pale yellow to off white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ± ovoid, 0.25 mm long, whitish, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, exerted from near top of palea, bottlebrushlike, whitish. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), remaining within floret, ± D-shaped, ± 0.9 × 0.4 mm, with shallow groove on 1 surface (ventral).

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