

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Polypogon monspeliensis – RABBITSFOOT GRASS [Poaceae]

Polypogon monspeliensis (L.) Desf., RABBITSFOOT GRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted, several-stemmed at base, ± erect to decumbent, 10–70(–100) cm tall; shoots essentially glabrous. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, < 2 mm diameter, tough, bent (geniculate) at nodes, internodes 90–185 mm long; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, with margins overlapping most of length and membranous, 8–140 mm long, shallowly ridged, without lobes (auricles) at top, of flag leaf inflated; ligule erect, membranous, jagged on obtuse to acute margin, in range 1.8–11 mm long, sometimes split to midpoint or more, minutely scabrous-puberulent on back (abaxial surface); collar mostly indistinct but with wavy margin; blade linear to lanceolate-linear, 30–250 × 4.5–10(–12) mm, the widest near base, flat, minutely toothed on margins, acuminate at tip, parallel-veined with veins raised on both surface but lacking a midrib, short-scabrous.

Inflorescence: spikelets, in terminal panicles, panicle initially narrowly lanceoloid to narrowly ellipsoid, 20–140 × 10–20 mm, becoming lobed as branches spread, with to 4 orders of branching, initially dense with rachis totally concealed, primary branches alternate distichous in semi-whorls of 3–7 at each node, spikelet with 1 subsessile floret, bracteate, awned; rachis striped (corrugated), glabrous; axes with axillary pulvinus, primary branch axis 5–25 mm long, striped, short-strigose or scabrous, other axes shorter, short-strigose, stalk of spikelet 0.2–1 mm long. **Spikelet:** erect, not compressed, breaking below glumes; **glumes** 2, awned, subequal, oblanceolate, 1.6–2.3(–2.7) mm long, at anthesis > floret, green with membranous margins, 2-lobed at tip, the lobes rounded or acute and 0.1–0.2 mm long, 1-veined, weakly keeled on back at base and rounded above midpoint, short-strigose with hairs extending beyond tip, minutely scabrous on margins and along midvein, the awn arising between lobes at tip, flexuous-wavy to straight, 4–8.5 mm long, colorless; rachilla not prolonged beyond palea; **lemma** short-awned, membranous, lanceolate, 0.9–1.1(–1.5) mm long, transparent, glossy and smooth on back, obscurely 5-veined, obtuse to truncate and short 5-toothed at tip, the awn ± terminal, in range 0.5–1.1 mm long; **palea** membranous, ovate, ca. 0.1 mm < lemma, inconspicuously 2-veined, not 2-keeled, minutely 2-toothed. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, membranous and lanceolate, ± 0.6 mm long; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, ca. 1 mm long, colorless; anthers exserted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.5–0.7 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, 0.8–1.1 mm long; ovary superior, obovoid, 0.3–0.4 mm long, colorless or pale golden yellow, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, ascending, narrowly separated 0.1 mm, 0.5–0.7 mm long, colorless or white, conspicuously feathery nearly to base. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), obovoid to ellipsoid, 0.9 × 0.35–0.4 mm, orangey brown (reddish), glabrous, with shriveled remnants of stigmas persisting at tip, obscurely wrinkled but lacking irregular longitudinal ridges.
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