

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Urochloa fusca – BROWNTOP SIGNALGRASS [Poaceae]

Urochloa fusca (Swartz) B. F. Hansen & Wunderl., BROWNTOP SIGNALGRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted, several-stemmed at base, cespitose, decumbent, in range to 40 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, foliage with scattered pilose and short-pilose hairs. **Stems (culms):** low-ridged (beneath leaf sheath) and conspicuously ridged (approaching inflorescence), to 3 mm diameter, lower stem glabrous or with short-pilose hairs on nodes. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll 2-keeled, to 55 mm long, glabrous on surfaces, short-ciliate on margins; sheath open, strongly ridged, \geq internode, pilose, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule membranous and long-ciliate, 1–1.5 mm long; collar pilose, white; blade linear-lanceolate, in range to 30–160 \times 5–13 mm, the widest near base, densely short-ciliate on margins, long-acuminate at tip, finely parallel-veined low-raised on upper surface, short-pilose and pilose. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal paniclelike array with ascending primary branches and secondary branchlets, spikelets stalked solitary or alternatively in pairs on the midportion of each branch, the pairs with 1 stalk much shorter and that spikelet sometimes smaller and sterile, fertile spikelet 2-flowered, the lower floret sterile, the upper floret bisexual, bracteate; central axis ca. 15-ridged, to 100 mm long, wiry, scabrous; primary branches to 10–75 mm long, axis strongly ridged and scabrous, branch and branchlet with pulvinus at base, pulvinus hirsute to short-hirsute; stalk (“pedicel”) scabrous and ca. 4 ridged, 0.5–3 mm long, with several hirsute hairs to 3 mm long. **Spikelet:** obovoid, mostly 2.9–3.4 \times 1.3–1.5 mm, glabrous, breaking below glumes; **glumes** 2, dimorphic, lower glume membranous, 1–1.3 mm long, obtuse at tip, with a green midvein, in range sometimes with a couple diverging secondary veins; upper glume rounded on back, to 3.2 mm long, greenish with 7 dark green veins with prominent cross veins. **Lower floret lemma** rounded on back, < upper glume, greenish with 7 dark green veins ca. 5 cross veins between adjacent veins; **palea** membranous, 1–2.4 mm long, with 2 green veins, the larger ones folded along veins to form narrow margins. **Upper floret lemma** hemi-ellipsoid, leathery aging hard (indurate), ca. 2 mm long, greenish aging ivory-colored, outer surface strongly textured (rugulose and verrucose), faintly 5-veined; palea ca. 1.9 mm long, outer surface textured like lemma, faintly 2-veined, strongly inrolled around flower, inner side with wide membranous margins below midpoint. **Flower: perianth (lodicules)** 2, oblique fan-shaped folded, 0.5 mm long, translucent, thick to above midpoint; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, ca. 3 mm long, white; anthers exerted at top of spikelet, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.8–1 mm long, light yellow aging reddish to rose, longitudinally dehiscent, pollen whitish; **pistil** 1, ca. 2.4 mm long; ovary superior, \pm 0.8 \times 0.5 mm, translucent, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, lower threadlike and colorless, exerted portion bottlebrushlike, 0.5–0.7 mm long, burgundy. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), of upper floret dispersed as unit within hardened lemma and palea, rugulose and verrucose on outer surface.

A. C. Gibson