

*Panicum capillare* L. (Poaceae)

**SPIKELET**

One sterile floret and one fertile floret, disarticulation below the glumes, falling as a unit from the plant or the fertile floret falls separately from the glumes

**General shape:** Elliptic or oblong; dorsal-ventrally compressed, dorsal side arched and ventral side flat, thickest near the mid-point

**Normal size:** 1.9 – 4 mm long x 1.0 – 1.5 mm wide

**Color:** Pale green to straw-colored, +/- with purple tinge

**Texture:** Glumes and sterile floret membranous to papery, surface +/- with soft short hairs, veins +/- with short stiff hairs

**Distinguishing features:** Lower glume +/- ½ the length of the spikelet, broadly triangular, the outer corners wrapping around the base of the upper glume; upper glume ovate, ca. equal to length of spikelet, apex tipped with a short, sharp point; sterile floret equal to length of spikelet, unawned; palea +/- equal in length to sterile lemma, hyaline, keels with short fine hairs

**FERTILE FLORET**

**General shape:** elliptic to oblong, dorsal-ventrally compressed, thickest at midpoint

**Normal size:** 1.0 – 1.75 mm long x 0.5 – 1.0 mm wide

**Color:** straw-colored to dark brown with prominent light-colored veins

**Texture:** hardened, smooth, glossy

**Distinguishing features:** : lemma 5-veined, margins in-rolled over margin of palea, apex tapering to a slight point

**CARYOPSIS**

**General shape:** broadly elliptic to oblong

**Normal size :** 1.0 – 1.5 mm long x 0.8 – 1.0 mm wide

**Color :** straw-colored

**Texture:** smooth, glabrous

**Embryo:** ca. ½ the length of caryopsis

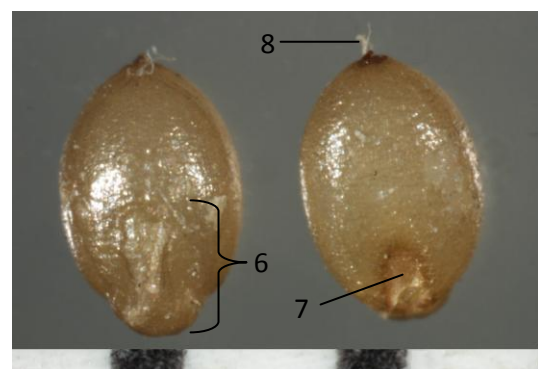
**Endosperm:** solid

**Hilum:** round to elliptic

Description by Deborah Meyer  
California Department of Food & Agriculture



*Panicum capillare* spikelets, fertile florets and caryopsis. Spikelets consist of a triangular lower glume (1) that wraps around the base of the upper glume, the papery upper glume (2) and sterile lemma (3) that are about equal in length, and a hardened fertile lemma (4) and fertile palea (5.)



Caryopsis in dorsal view showing embryo (6) and ventral view showing hilum (7). The remnants of the style bases (8) can remain attached at the caryopsis apex.

Images by Jim Effenberger