

Sporobolus spp. (Poaceae)

SPIKELET

Typically single floret spikelet, up to 3 florets per spikelet, disarticulation above the glumes (glumes remain attached to plant). Size, shape, color, texture, and distinguishing features of all parts of the spikelet differ depending on species. The descriptions included here the extremes of the genus.

FLORET

General shape: elliptic to lanceolate; round in cross-section or laterally compressed

Normal size: lemma 0.7 – 6.5 (10) mm long; palea 0.7 – 6.7 (10) mm long; palea +/- equal to or longer than lemma

Color: straw-colored to green and/or purple tinged
Texture: lemma and palea +/- membranous, +/- translucent, glabrous or with short stiff hairs depending on species

Distinguishing features: palea 2- veined and often splitting open between veins at maturity; callus blunt

FRUIT

Not technically a caryopsis because the seed coat is not fused to the pericarp.

General shape: globose, ellipsoid, obovoid, fusiform or quadangular

Normal size: 0.4 – 2.3 mm long x 0.5 – 1.0 mm wide

Color : white, yellow, orange-brown, red-brown, black

Texture: pericarp thin and transparent to hard and opaque, smooth or striate, +/- loose fitting, fruit of some species become mucilaginous if wet and the seed may slip out of the pericarp under these conditions

SEED

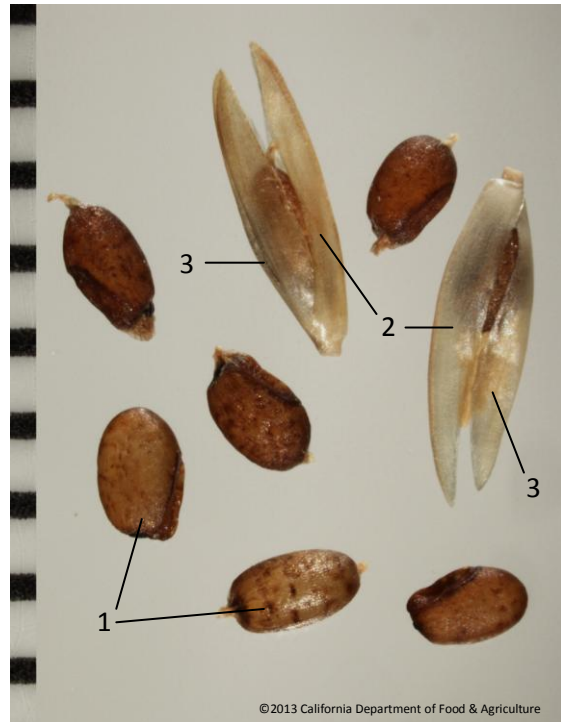
General shape, size and color: same as fruit

Embryo: scutellum and/or root-shoot axis same color as pericarp or dark brown to black; 1/2 - 3/4 the length of the seed

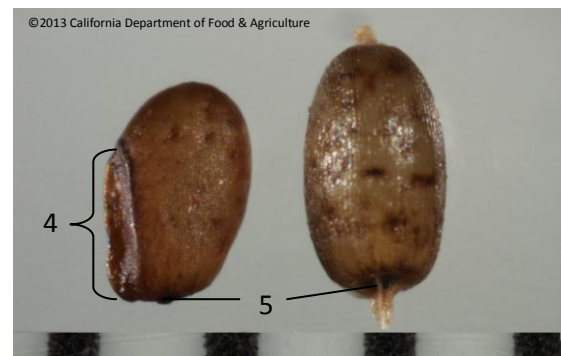
Endosperm: solid, +/- transparent

Hilum: basal

Description by Deborah Meyer
 California Department of Food & Agriculture



Sporogolus compositus fruits (1) and florets showing lemmas (2) and paleas (3).



Sporogolus compositus fruits in lateral view (left) showing embryo (4) and ventral view showing hilum area (5).

Images by Jim Effenberger