

Paspalum L.

Paspalum dilatatum Poiret, DALLISGRASS. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, several-stemmed at base, cespitose, unbranched from base, with ascending to spreading inflorescences, to 140 cm tall; shoots pilose at plant base (sheaths), essentially glabrous above; rhizomes short—40+ × 4–10 mm, white aging yellowish, internodes conspicuously strigose just below node; adventitious roots nodal on rhizome. **Stems (culms):** compressed in internodes, to 5 mm diameter, tough, nodes often bent (geniculate) and brownish at nodes, glabrous; internodes pithy to hollow for short intervals. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll ovate, to 20 mm long, 2-keeled with strongly inward-folded margins, glabrous; sheath of foliage leaf open, to 180 mm long, somewhat keeled and with slightly raised veins, conspicuously pilose (basal leaves) to glabrous or pilose on margins above node (most cauline leaves), lacking lobes (auricles) at top; ligule membranous, obtuse, 2–5.5 mm long, translucent-gray becoming brownish; collar pale green, pilose on upper side; blade linear, 45–570 × 4–12 mm, the widest at or above midblade, flat, minutely toothed on margins base to tip, long-tapered to tip, parallel-veined with veins raised on both surfaces, midrib slightly sunken and whitish on upper surface and raised on lower surface, upper surface pilose at base on collar. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicle of 3–7(–11) racemelike branches, panicle with spreading lax branches, branches 1 per node, 1-sided having overlapping spikelets on lower side, 30–115 × 3 mm, first branch the longest and gradually reduced upward, spikelets in alternating pairs along central ridge, bracteate; peduncle somewhat compressed, 120–500+ mm long, tough; bract subtending branch absent; principal panicle axis channeled and hemi-cylindric, ± 0.6 mm diameter, glabrous; branch base long-pilose and sometimes minutely puberulent, rachis ribbonlike, ± 1.3 mm wide, upper surface lacking spikelets and with white midvein, lower surface with paired stalks of spikelets arising alternately along central ridge and lateral wings sometimes wavy; stalks of paired spikelets fused at point of attachment to rachis, flattened on upper side. **Spikelet:** 2-flowered but only upper floret fertile, compressed-ovate, breaking below glume; **glume** 1, lower glume absent, upper glume ovate, 3.5–3.7 × 2.2–2.4 mm, greenish white, with 5 or 7 veins converging at tip, with long silky hairs; **lemma** (lower floret) ca. 0.2 mm < upper glume, flat, (3–)5–6-veined, with long silky hairs at inrolled margin, lemma (upper floret) ca. 2.2 × 1.7 mm, stiff (chartaceous), veins obscure, with inrolled margins, glossy, glabrous; **palea** (upper floret) enclosed by margins of lemma, glabrous, the exposed surface flat, chartaceous, the incurved margin membranous, extending to midpoint and enveloping flower, open at top. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, very fleshy, inversely conic to inversely pyramidal and 3-lobed at anthesis, ca. 0.3–0.5 mm long, white; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, ± 3 mm long, white; anthers exserted, dorsifixed, dithecal, linear, 1–1.3 mm long, burgundy or purplish pink, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish white; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, compressed-obovoid to compressed-fusiform with blunt ends, ± 0.7 mm long, translucent, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, translucent, ca. 1 mm long; stigmas exserted from lemma near midpoint, bottlebrushlike, ± 2 mm long, purple to burgundy. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), enclosed by folded palea, unit flattened and ± round, 1.9–2.1 mm long, straw-colored to yellowish, concave on 1 side and convex on other side; achene permanently retained, thinly lens-shaped and broadly ovate, slightly smaller than palea. Mid-May–mid-August.

Naturalized. Perennial herb occurring in grassy, disturbed areas, especially in the eastern part of the range where this species is most easily observed in poorly managed lawns. *Paspalum dilatatum* is the largest of the three species found in range, and has colorful purple to burgundy stigmas.