

82. AIRA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 63. 1753.

银须草属 yin xu cao shu

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Annuals, small. Leaf blades rolled. Inflorescence an open or contracted panicle. Spikelets small, laterally compressed, florets 2, both alike, bisexual, separated by very short internode, disarticulating below each floret; rachilla not extended beyond upper floret; glumes persistent, equal, enclosing florets, ovate, membranous, shining, 1(–3)-veined, apex acute; floret callus small, usually shortly bearded laterally, rarely glabrous; lemmas ovate, rounded on back, membranous becoming firm at maturity, indistinctly 5-veined, glabrous, upper part scaberulous to scabrid, awned from lower back or lower floret awnless, apex 2-toothed; awn geniculate with twisted column; palea slightly shorter than lemma. Anthers small. Caryopsis fusiform. $2n = 14, 28$.

Eight species: centered on the Mediterranean region, extending northward to Scandinavia and eastward to Iran and Afghanistan; introduced in other temperate regions; one species in China.

1. *Aira caryophyllea* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 66. 1753.

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Culms solitary or tufted, erect or slightly geniculate, very slender, 5–30 cm tall, scabrid. Leaf sheaths scaberulous; leaf blades narrowly linear to filiform, 1–5 cm, 2–3 mm wide; ligule lanceolate, 1–4 mm, acute becoming lacerate. Panicle open, ovate in outline, up to 10 cm; branches 2–5 cm, capillary, scabrid, bearing spikelets in clusters toward tips; pedicels 2–4 mm, up to twice spikelet length, a pear-shaped swelling below spikelet. Spikelets ovate-oblong in outline, 2–3.5 mm, shining, silvery-gray or tinged purplish; glumes as long as spikelet, keel scaberulous; florets both awned; lemmas brown, 3/4 length of glumes, scabrid, narrowed to 2-toothed apex; awn 2.5–4 mm, arising from lower 1/3 of lemma. Anthers 0.3–0.6 mm.

Dry grassy places in mountains; ca. 3600 m. W Xizang [India, Russia; N Africa, SW Asia, Europe; introduced in North and South America and Australia].

This pioneer of dry, open places is now widespread in temperate regions.

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