

*Dactyloctenium aegyptium* (L.) Willd., CROWFOOT GRASS, DURBAN CROWFOOT. Annual, fibrous-rooted, several-stemmed at base, matlike,  $\pm$  decumbent forming adventitious roots at lower nodes, 20–40+ cm tall; shoots often bent upward at 1 or 2 nodes along stem, somewhat scabrous. **Stems (culms):** elliptic in  $\times$ -section, to 3 mm diameter, tough, glabrous; nodes and internodes solid. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, typically  $<$  internode, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule densely hairy but membranous at base, ca. 0.3 mm long; blade linear-lanceolate, 25–70(–150)  $\times$  2.5–6 mm, the widest near base,  $\pm$  flat, collar white with short hairs on lower surface, entire and ciliate with long, bulbous-based hairs to midpoint on margins and minutely toothed approaching tip, parallel-veined with midrib but not raised on lower surface, scabrous along principal veins approaching tip. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal umbel-like panicles of 2–4(–5) spreading to ascending branches (spikes), spikes 10–35(–50) mm long, bristle-tipped, 1-sided with spikelets in 2 overlapping rows on upper side, spikelet of (1–)2–3-florets (terminal floret often sterile), spikelets absent on terminal 2–4 mm of axis; tip of peduncle and bases of spikes silky-hairy; spike rachis triangular in  $\times$ -section, green with whitish or tannish edges, silky-hairy between spikelets. **Spikelet:** compressed side-to-side and  $\perp$  rachis axis, short-awned; **glumes** 2, awned, subequal, 1.5–2 mm long, keeled, membranous aging dark gray in fruit, 1-veined, lower glume acute or short-pointed at tip, upper glume awned at tip, the awn wavy to curved or straight and 1–2 mm long, minutely toothed primarily along inner edges; **lemma** ovate with sharp point at tip,  $\pm$  3.5 mm long, keeled, membranous with conspicuous green vein along keel and 1 faint vein near each margin, with minute teeth along keel; **palea**  $<$  lemma, 2-keeled, membranous, concave between keels, short-ciliate along keels. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2,  $\pm$  deltate (narrow at base) with a lateral projection and wavy tip, ca 0.3 mm long, whitish; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, ca. 3 mm long, white; anthers exserted, basifixed, dithecal, 0.2–0.4 mm long, white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, white, minutely warty, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2,  $\pm$  feathery (plumose), exserted slightly from lemma tip and touching anthers. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis) sandgrainlike, 1.5 mm long, gray, cobblestonelike, hard. Mid-June–late July.

Naturalized. Annual weed first collected in 2004 on the northeastern boundary of Chatsworth Reserve growing in a wet ditch, but expected elsewhere. *Dactyloctenium aegyptium* is a summer-active grass with C<sub>4</sub> photosynthesis. Crowfoot grass gets the common name from the nature of the inflorescence. The fruit of this species is very distinctive, being like a hard, gray sand grain with a cobblestonelike surface.

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