

Festuca elmeri Scribn. & Merr., COAST FESCUE. Perennial herb, fibrous-rooted, loosely clumped, several-stemmed at base, erect to ascending, in range 40–100 cm tall; shoots with 3–4 nodes above base, essentially glabrous. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, to 2.5 mm diameter, internodes 30–200 mm long, the shortest of basal leaves and increasing upwards; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, 30–160 mm long, weakly ridged, green but ridges pale green, margins narrowly membranous but unequal with exposed margin narrower, margins mostly overlapping but not on throat, throat 4–45 mm long, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule truncate and slightly oblique, membranous, < 0.5 mm long, entire or jagged on margin; collar undifferentiated or \pm cartilaginous, smooth or slightly scabrous; blade linear, 90–280 \times 1.8–6 mm (flag leaf generally shorter and narrower than other leaves), flat or becoming inrolled, entire, parallel-veined, upper surface slightly scabrous to pubescent, lower surface glabrous. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicle, panicle open, 115–150 \times 12–70 mm, lateral branches initially ascending later spreading to drooping (positioned by pulvinus in axil), spikelets ascending, spikelet with 3–6 florets commonly with a diminutive, sterile terminal floret, bracteate, essentially glabrous, awned; peduncle to 310 mm long, smooth; rachis straight, with (4–)6–10 nodes and 1–2 lateral branches per node, straight to \pm flexuous approaching tip, smooth; bract subtending lateral branch present or absent, 1–2 mm long; lateral branches 15–90 mm long, if 2 branches per node then commonly 1 branch short-stalked (< 5 mm) and the other branch long-stalked (> 3 \times short stalk), with pulvinus in axil, glabrous and smooth at base, sometimes becoming minutely scabrous above; stalk of spikelet 1–9 mm long, usually minutely scabrous. **Spikelet:** ellipsoid slightly compressed side-to-side, 7.5–9.5 \times 1.9–3.5 mm, finely scabrous to puberulent on lemmas, breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, unequal, lanceolate, in range 2.2–3.3 mm long and 1-veined (lower glume) and 3–3.8 mm long and 3-veined (upper glume), green along and between veins but narrowly membranous on margins, becoming purplish red mostly on margins and at tip, smooth and glabrous or finely scabrous along midvein above midpoint; rachilla 1–2 mm long, finely scabrous; callus rounded, 0.15–0.25 \times 0.3–0.35 mm, puberulent at least on 1 (distal) edge; **lemma** awned, lanceolate, in range 5–6.7 \times 0.5–0.8 mm, convex on 1 face (dorsal), mostly green but faintly 5-veined, faintly purplish red-membranous on margins and at minutely 2-toothed tip with awn between teeth, finely scabrous or puberulent, the awn straight or sometimes with a short flexuous section at or near base, in range 1.5–3.3(–5) mm long, minutely scabrous; **palea** linear to linear-oblongate, = lemma, membranous, 2-veined, 2-keeled, with margins folded inward along the veins partially enveloping ovary and fruit, light yellowish green, puberulent along keels above midpoint and between keels approaching tip, with veins extending to tip. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, lanceoloid, ca. 0.8 mm long, translucent, turgid at base during anthesis; **stamens** 3, free; filaments exerted, slender, to 2.5 mm long; anther basifixed, dithecal, linear, 2.7–4 \times 0.3–0.4 mm, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, at anthesis ca. 3 mm long; ovary superior, obconic, ca. 1 \times 0.5 mm, slightly compressed front-to-back, densely pubescent on top, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, to 2.5 mm long, feathery stigmatic (plumose) 3/4 or entire length. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), enclosed by palea and hardened lemma, narrowly ellipsoid compressed front-to-back, 5–6.5 \times 1.5 mm, concave to flat on 1 face (ventral), convex and sometimes broadly grooved on 1 face (dorsal), with tuft of short hairs on tip.

Native. Perennial herb known from one collection along Piuma Road (SMM). *Festuca elmeri* is commonly known occurring in the Coast Ranges from Santa Barbara County to Oregon.

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