

*Festuca microstachys* Nutt., PACIFIC FESCUE. Annual, fibrous-rooted, 1–several-stemmed at base, sometimes loosely tufted, erect or from decumbent base, in range 15–42 cm tall; shoots with cauline leaves, glabrous to short-villous or pubescent. **Stems (culms):** cylindrical, slender, tough, whitish, glabrous. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open and overlapping itself at node, 32–68 mm long, membranous and ciliate on margins, with several conspicuously raised veins, furrowed in age, glabrous or with hairs, at least pubescent submarginally on exposed membranous tissue, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule truncate, 0.2–0.3 mm long, minutely and jaggedly ciliate; blades linear and narrowly tapered, (25–)50–82(–125) × 1–1.6 mm, flat becoming inrolled when water stressed, minutely serrulate on margins except basal portion, parallel-veined with veins raised on both surfaces, upper surface densely short-villous, lower surface glabrous. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal, often erect panicles (on short individuals appearing like a raceme), panicle lanceoloid to ovoid in outline, 53–130 × 25–55 mm, with ± horizontal short lateral branches with pulvinus in axil and horizontal to widely spreading (reflexed) spikelet, well-spaced spikelets, at 9–12 alternate distichous nodes and never more than 1 branch per node (lower branches sometimes very close and appearing like 2 branches per node), the lowest branch to 45 mm long and having to 10 spikelets, upper spikelets often only 1 per node, spikelet with 1–3(–6) florets, bracteate, awned. **Spikelet:** with ascending florets, (4–)5.2–7.4(–10) mm long; rachilla internodes 0.8–0.9 mm long, breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, unequal, narrowly triangular, lower glume 3.2–4.5 mm long and 1-veined, upper glume 4.6–5.2 mm long and strongly 3-veined, narrowly membranous on margins and with green veins; **lemma** awned, triangular, (3.5–)5–5.5 × 1.1–1.2 mm (excluding awn) and 5-veined, yellowish green, scabrous along veins and terminal awn, the awn ± straight, 8–9.5 mm long; **palea** membranous, 5.5–6 mm long, slightly > lemma, 2-veined, minutely 2-toothed at tip with teeth 0.2–0.5 mm long. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis).

Native. Annual occasionally observed in relatively undisturbed, grassy openings in shrubland. *Festuca microstachys* is a variable species, and often is treated as having four varieties in California, but the varieties may be found within a single population, and so varieties may not be useful because they can only be distinguished on the basis of hairs present or absent and quantity on the glumes and lemmas. Our populations generally fit var. *pauciflora* (Scribn. ex Beal) Lonard & Gould, which tends to have two florets per spikelet and bracts of the florets typically are not hairy.

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