

*Leptochloa fusca* (L.) Kunth subsp. *uninervia* (J. Presl) N. Snow, MEXICAN

SPRANGLETOP. Annual, ± emergent aquatic, fibrous-rooted, cespitose, several–many-stemmed at base, unbranched or sometimes 1-branched at or below midshoot, ± erect, in range 35–110 cm tall; shoots with numerous slender, ascending basal leaves and several spreading cauline leaves, glabrous. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, < 4 mm diameter, tough, often purplish above and below nodes or on lower internodes, smooth, internodes to 200 mm long; with a peripheral ring of air canals (lacunae) below epidermis, internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, typically > internode, green to purplish red, slightly keeled just below collar, finely low-ridged, minutely scabrous along veins above midpoint, without lobes (auricles) at top (sometimes with appendage-like extension of collar, including edges of ligule, split and thus appearing like erect auricles several mm long); ligule membranous, acute (sometimes truncate, if short), in range 2–5.5 mm long, repeatedly split lengthwise to base, sometimes long-ciliate at tip; collar to 1 mm long, whitish or with red-purple at center; blade linear, 35–350(–500) × 2.5–8 mm, the widest approaching midblade and from there long-tapered to tip, ± flat with a weak keel approaching base, minutely toothed on margins from base to tip, parallel-veined with veins raised (especially 8 principal ones) on upper surface but veins uniform and not raised on lower surface, minutely toothed along veins, upper surface with conspicuous midrib, the midrib flat, 0.5–1 mm wide at base, and light gray to midblade. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal, open panicles, panicle of 35–55 ascending and spreading, straight branches, ovoid to ellipsoid, in range 150–300 mm long at maturity, each branch with several–25 spikelets, spikelet with (3–)5–10 florets (terminal floret sterile), bracteate, lacking awns; flag leaf blade in range spreading but > panicle; branches alternate along panicle rachis, (20–)40–80 mm long, 1-sided, on upper side forming many appressed, short-stalked, overlapping spikelets, spikelets evenly spaced except the lower 1 or 2 closest to branch base, persistent in fruit; branch axis straight, < 2 mm diameter, wiry, finely striped and ridged, short-serrate and scabrous on ridges, with green axillary pulvinus; stalk of spikelet 0.3–0.5 mm long. **Spikelet:** fusiform to narrowly lanceoloid and compressed side-to-side, in range (3.5–)5–7.5 × 0.9–1.4 mm (the lower 1 or 2 spikelets sometimes slightly longer than other spikelets), breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, unequal, lower glume lanceolate, 1.1–1.3 mm long, upper glume obovate to ± elliptic, 1.8–2.2 mm long, keeled, 1-veined, pale green with green midvein, aging scarious and whitish with yellowish green to tan vein, short-serrate along keel and on margins, acute at tip; **lemma** elliptic, 2–2.6 mm long, ± keeled along raised midvein, at anthesis greenish with 3 green veins not converging at tip, soon becoming purplish and metallic gray (especially below midpoint), translucent in fruit lacking a dark spot at base, sericeous between margin and lateral vein below midpoint, obtuse or truncate to minutely 2-lobed (lateral veins) and with a tiny point (end of central vein), somewhat short-fringed, sometimes inconspicuously 2-toothed around central point; **palea** typically 0.1–0.3 mm < lemma, similar to lemma in color and texture but at anthesis stained reddish from stigma, 2-keeled, with infolded narrow margins, sericeous between margin and keel from base to tip. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, fleshy, inversely triangular, ca. 0.2 × 0.2–0.3 mm, with a slight lateral lobe, colorless, glabrous; **stamens** 3, free, exserted; filaments threadlike, ca. 1.5 mm long, colorless or whitish; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, linear, 0.3–0.5 mm long, pale yellow drying creamy white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen colorless;

**pistil** 1; ovary superior, subspheric-ovoid to obovoid, ca.  $0.3 \times 0.2$  mm, translucent light green, broadly conic at tip, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, widely spreading, colorless and glistening, with stigmatic portion exerted sideways, feathery (plumose) from below midpoint and 0.5–0.8 mm long, reddish and translucent. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), ellipsoid compressed front-to-back, in range  $0.8\text{--}1 \times 0.4\text{--}0.5$  mm, whitish, smooth; covered by loose, grayish lemma and palea, rachilla appressed to palea, ca. 0.7 mm long. Mid-June–late October.

Naturalized. Weedy annual commonly found growing as an emergent aquatic, especially in wet ditches and along roadsides where water persists, but also occurring around the edges of ponds and creeks. *Leptochloa fusca* subsp. *uninervia* has panicles that are very distinctive from a distance, by having many branches spreading at  $45^\circ$ . This is a subspecies that lacks awns on the lemmas and has shorter florets than the awned subspecies *fascicularis*. Mexican sprangletop has also been treated as *Leptochloa uninervia*, and is so recognizable from the other forms of *L. fusca* that it might be better to treat it again as a distinct species.

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