

Schismus barbatus (L.) Thell., COMMON MEDITERRANEAN GRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted, several-many-stemmed at base, tightly cespitose, decumbent to ascending, in range 2–14 cm tall; shoots with inflorescence to 250 mm long, fine-leaved; adventitious roots at basal nodes. **Stems (culms):** cylindric, < 1 mm diameter at nodes, smooth, glabrous, often becoming reddish; internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, < internode length, low-ridged, with a tuft of straight, colorless hairs at collar, the hairs 1.5–2.5(–4) mm long, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule membranous, irregularly cut, 0.3–1.1 mm long, with ciliate margin, the hairs to 1 mm long; blade linear, typically < 50 × 1.5 mm, the widest at midpoint, flat becoming inrolled when water-stressed, minutely toothed on margins, acuminate and crimson at folded tip (not boat-shaped), parallel-veined with raised veins, minutely scabrous along veins, upper surface sparsely long-hairy at base. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicles, panicle to 45 × 5 mm, of several–30+ spikelets, spikelet with (4–)5–7 bisexual florets, bracteate, minutely scabrous, lacking awns; rachis flattened, branches alternate distichous, 1–2 per node, loosely appressed to rachis. **Spikelet:** narrowly lanceoloid-fusiform, in range (4–)4.5–5.5 mm long, compressed slightly side-to-side, the terminal floret typically exerted beyond glumes, with minutely scabrous rachilla, breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, ± equal, ovate, (4–)4.5–5.2 mm long, rounded on back, acuminate at tip, 7-veined or sometimes 5-veined, with wide membranous margins; **lemma** broadly elliptic-ovate, 1.8–2.2 mm long, shallowly 2-lobed at tip, the lobes < 0.3 mm long, acute to obtuse, typically wider than long, widely membranous on margins and tip, commonly with a midvein extension in sinus between lobes, mostly 7–9-veined, ± ciliate on basal margins with ascending short hairs, sometimes appressed-hairy between veins on outer surface; **palea** spatulate to narrowly obovate, 1.7–2.2 mm long, ≤ lemma, colorless, 2-veined, 2-keeled only to midpoint, broadly acute to short-notched at tip. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, ± trapezoidal, ca. 0.2 × 0.1 mm, narrower at base, colorless, surface minutely convex, sometimes with 1–2 fine hairs on 1 shoulder; **stamens** 3, free, included; filaments 0.5–0.7 mm long, whitish; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, (0.2–)0.3–0.5 mm long, light yellow to beige often purplish red around tip, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen colorless; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, obovoid, ca. 0.25 mm long, glossy, colorless, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, bases close, 0.6–0.8 mm long, colorless, stigmatic above midpoint; stigmas erect in floret, narrowly feathery (plumose). **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), obovoid, 0.6–0.8 mm long, glossy and translucent, glabrous; embryo observable within achene. Late January–mid-April.

Naturalized. Annual occurring occasionally through the range in full sun on thin or hard-packed soil that become very dry. *Schismus barbatus* is a grass that tends to grow flat against the ground, often in dense populations. It superficially resembles a water-stressed specimen of the turf grass *Poa annua*, but is easily distinguished by spikelet structure. This species is tremendously abundant in the winter desert annual florula of southern California.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson