FORM: Grasslike perennial with 3-ranked leaves and slender, solid, triangular culms, 1-3 dm (4-12 in) tall, densely tuft forming from short ascending rhizomes, culms same length or shorter than leaves.

LEAVES: Blades elongate and lax, 1-4 mm wide, often longer than culm, basal sheaths reddish.

INFLORESCENCE: Terminal, solitary, staminate spike (1); 1-4 short, few-flowered lateral pistillate spikes borne near staminate spike, pistillate flowers (2) with 3 stigmas, the lowest subtended by a leafy bract (3) which is longer than the staminate spike, one or more small pedunculate pistillate spikes often hidden near base of culms (4); May-Aug.

FRUIT: 3-sided achene, perigynium (5) finely hairy, 2-5 mm long, beak 1-2 mm long.

ENEMIES: Fire: resistant, regeneration from rhizomes to preburn levels within 1-2 years.