

"ACOSTIA", A NEW GENUS OF GRASSES FROM ECUADOR

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ACOSTIA Swallen, gen. nov.

Inflorescentia ex 3 - 4 racemis appressis constans; spiculae binae vel solitariae, pedicellis spiculis brevioris, scabris; gluma prima minutissima vel obsoleta; fructus pallidus, marginibus firmis incurvatis.

ACOSTIA GRACILIS Swallen, sp. nov.

Perennis; culmi erecti, 25 - 40 cm. alti, dense caespitosi, gracillimi, glabri; vaginae glabrae, marginibus dense pubescentes, superne carinatae; ligula brevissima, minute ciliata; laminae planae, 7 - 13 cm. longae, 3 - 4 mm. latae, glabrae, infra costam hispidae; spiculae binae solitariae, 2 - 2,5 mm. longae, appressae; gluma prima minutissima vel obsoleta; gluma secunda et lemma sterile fructo longiora, dense pubescentia.

Perennial; culms 25 - 40 cm. tall, very densely tufted, very slender, erect, glabrous, or the nodes sometimes sparsely bearded; sheaths longer than the internodes or the uppermost exerted, keeled toward summit, much wider than the base of the blade, glabrous on the back, densely pubescent on the margins, with a few long hairs in the throat; ligule very short, minutely ciliate; blades flat, narrowed toward both ends, 7 - 13 cm. long, 3 - 4 mm. wide, glabrous, the margins scabrous the midnerve hispid on the underside; inflorescence 7 - 12 cm. long, consisting of 3 or 4 appressed, rather distant racemes, as much as 4,5 cm. long; spikelets solitary or paired, 2 - 2,5 mm. long, appressed, the pedicels rounded, scabrous, shorter than the spikelets; first glume minute or wanting; second glume and sterile lemma pointed beyond the fruit, densely pubescent, the second glume 5 -

nerved; fruit 1,7 mm. long, pale, with a few hairs at the summit, the margins of the lemma firm, inrolled.

TYPE: *M. Acosta-Solis 12131*, collected on banks of the Río Lita, Prov. Inbabura, altitude 501 meters, Ecuador, April 22, 1949.

Some years ago, I tentatively considered this specimen to be a new species of *Digitaria* because of the arrangement of the inflorescence, and the spikelets occurring mostly in pairs. However, the fruit does not have the flat and hyaline margins as they do in *Digitaria*. It seems more like *Panicum*, but the first glume is wanting or nearly so, and the racemes have paired spikelets, very similar to *Digitaria*. Conceivably it could be a hybrid between *Digitaria* and *Panicum*, but such a disposition seems very unlikely indeed.

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