

# Andropogon virginicus

## Broomsedge

*Andropogon virginicus* L.

Family: Poaceae

**Description:** Erect bunch grass to 40 inches tall, freely branching in upper two-thirds; internodes hollow and partially pithy. Sheaths smooth or hairy on margins, ligules are fringed membranes. Blades narrow, flat or folded, 14 inches long by 0.2 inches wide, hairy at base and along margins of the underside. Inflorescence branches emerge at upper nodes with 2–4 floral spikes (racemes), covered with silky hairs. *A. virginicus* typically has slender inflorescences. Pictured here are specimens with bushy inflorescences. There is some dispute about this bushy variant being *A. virginicus* or a separate species, but it is very commonly found along with specimens with slender inflorescences. *Aner*, man; *pogon*, beard, or bearded man<sup>(24, 70)</sup>.

**Distribution:** From eastern North America. Now occurs down to Central America. In Hawai‘i, a pest in dry to moist pastures, forests, and roadsides on O‘ahu and Hawai‘i. First collected on Hawai‘i in 1924<sup>(24, 70)</sup>.

**Environmental impact:** Forms nearly monotypic stands in poor pastures and in open and disturbed conservation lands. Poor forage. A fire hazard.



**Management:** Research in Oklahoma indicated that glyphosate on intact old growth was not effective, but it was very effective after removal of old growth, e.g., by fire. However, seedlings readily reinfested the treated area<sup>(9)</sup>. Glyphosate is effective for controlling broomsedge but thorough application to live foliage is critical. HAVO staff controlled broomsedge with foliar applications of glyphosate at 1% in water (Chris Zimmer, HAVO). Grazing management is probably the only practical way to control grass weeds in pastures.