

GYMNOSCHOENUS

Description: Densely tufted perennials. **Culms** rigid, nodeless. **Leaves** basal; blade rigid, flat or concave; ligule membranous and ciliate; sheath long-ciliate on upper margins. **Inflorescence** a terminal, dense, globose head; involucre bracts leaf-like. **Spikelets** numerous, compressed, with 1 bisexual flower and a male one below it. **Glumes** 6-8, +/- distichous, lowest few sterile and remaining with inflorescence when uppermost glumes and nut fall. **Hypogynous bristles** 2 or 3, filiform, antrorsely scabrous. **Stamens** 3. **Style** 3-fid. **Nut** with the outermost layer loose, thin, easily removed.

Distribution and occurrence: World: 2 species, endemic Australia. Australia: N.S.W., Vic., Tas., S.A., W.A.

There is one species in NSW – *Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*

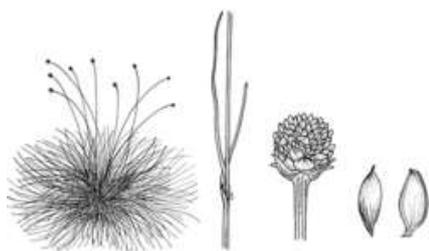
Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus, Button Grass

Description: Big tussock-forming perennial. Culms terete or somewhat compressed, striate but smooth, glabrous, often 1 m or more high, 1-2.5 mm diam. Leaves with blade often 50 cm long, 1-2.5 mm wide; sheath striate but shining, greyish yellow-brown. Inflorescence 1.5-2 cm diam.; involucre bracts usually 3, broad and sheathing at base, to about as long as inflorescence. Glumes obovate to broad-elliptic, glistening, yellow-brown, papery with thinner wavy, erose margin; lowest 3 or 4 glumes +/- broad-oblong, much shorter than upper; uppermost 3 glumes 5-5.5 mm long, the lowest of these 3 closely enveloping the other 2 much narrower glumes. Bristles somewhat longer than nut, usually remaining with inflorescence. Anthers 2.5-3 mm long; apical appendage 0.3-0.7 mm long. Nut (rarely collected) obovoid to broad-ellipsoid, 3.0-3.5 mm long, 1.6-1.8 mm diam., the loose outermost layer grey-brown, sparsely hispidulous at apex and base of style or glabrous; the inner nut c. 2.5 mm long with shining, slightly wrinkled and minutely reticulate, pale red-brown surface.

Flowering: spring-summer.

Distribution and occurrence: Coast south from Myall Lakes, and Tablelands south from Gibraltar Range to the Robertson area. Grows in permanent swamps and on wet slopes. NSW subdivisions: NC, CC, SC, NT, CT, ST. Other Australian states: Vic. Tas. S.A.

In the Blue Mtns, there is a form that differs in having long awns (2-3 mm long) on the lowest sterile glumes. These glumes also differ in being acute and scattered-pubescent, while the involucre bracts are long-ciliate at the top of the broad base and have a blade that is up to twice as long as the inflorescence.



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