

OREOBOLUS

Description: Small, rhizomatous, glabrous perennials, forming dense mats or cushions. **Culms** trigonous, very short, mostly hidden amongst leaf sheaths. **Leaves** numerous, often flattened and distichous; sheath open, with apex often produced in small rounded auricles; pseudopetiole slightly concave to channelled, narrower than sheath or blade, rigid; blade slightly twisted relative to pseudopetiole, rigid, flatter than pseudopetiole. **Inflorescence** small, often + concealed among leaves but still longer than culm, consisting of 1--6 spikelets on short branches at 1--3 nodes; involucre bracts leaf-like, with closed sheaths. **Spikelets** compressed, with 2--5 glumes, enclosing a single bisexual flower. **Glumes** leaf-like, outermost longest. Hypogynous scales in 2 alternating whorls, flat, persistent on rachilla after nut falls. **Stamens** 3. **Style** 3-fid. **Nut** trigonous to terete, smooth.

Distribution and occurrence: World: 14 species, at high altitudes in Australasia, South America, Malesia, Pacific islands. Australia: 5 species (4 species endemic), N.S.W., Vic., Tas
Leaf blades often have distinctive patterns of longitudinal bands of stomates (visible as whitish dots with a hand lens) and faint to obvious longitudinal ribs on the adaxial surface.

Key to the genus <i>Oreobolus</i>		
1	Leaf blades with a median stomate-less longitudinal band adaxially between 2 faint or obvious ribs; apex of nut acute	<i>Oreobolus distichus</i> ACT, ST
	Leaf blades entirely covered with stomates adaxially	2
2	Leaf blades with 3--6 evenly spaced ribs adaxially; apex of nut obtuse or truncate	<i>Oreobolus pumilio</i> ACT, ST
	Leaf blades without or with 1 or 2 faint ribs adaxially; apex of nut an elongated cone, collapsing when mature	<i>Oreobolus oxycarpus</i> ACT, ST

Oreobolus distichus

Description: Small, mat-forming herbs to 10 (rarely to 15) cm high. Leaves often distichous; sheath with rounded auricles; pseudopetiole thick, channelled, 6-20 (rarely to 32) mm long; blade 8-50 mm long, 0.5-1.2 mm wide, with a median band without stomates between 2 faint or obvious ribs; apex obtuse or rarely acute. Inflorescence with a single spikelet. Spikelet 7-22 mm long. Glumes 3 or rarely 4, whitish with green leaf-like apex to pale brown; outermost glume 6-20 mm; innermost glume 5-10 mm long. Scales straw-coloured to dark yellow-brown. Anthers 2.5-4 mm long. Nut ovoid, acute, 1.7-2.2 mm long, 1.0-1.3 mm diam., pale to dark yellow-brown.

Flowering: summer.

Distribution and occurrence: Grows in moist places in high altitude to alpine areas; near Ebor, Barrington Tops, and south from the Brindabella Ra. NSW subdivisions: NT, ST. Other Australian states: Vic. Tas.

Oreobolus oxycarpus subsp. *oxycarpus*

Description: Small, mat-forming herbs to 10 cm high. Leaves spirodistichous; sheaths with rounded auricles; pseudopetiole slightly concave, 5-16 mm long; blade 7-17 (rarely to 25) mm long, 0.5-1.2 mm wide, densely covered with stomates adaxially and with 2 faint ribs or without ribs; apex obtuse. Inflorescence with 1-3 spikelets. Spikelets 4-12 mm long. Glumes 3, whitish with green apex to pale brown, occasionally tinged dark red-brown; outermost glume 3.7-11 mm long;

innermost glume 2.5-5 mm long. Scales straw-coloured. Anthers 1-3 mm long. Nut ovoid, with long-tapering conical apex often collapsing at maturity, 1.8-2.9 mm long, 0.7-1.1 mm diam., yellow-brown or with apex blackish.

Flowering: summer.

Distribution and occurrence: Grows in bog areas and on swampy ground in high altitude to alpine areas; Barrington Tops, and south from the Brindabella Ra. NSW subdivisions: NT, ST. Other Australian states: Vic. Tas.

Oreobolus pumilio subsp. pumilio

Description: Small, mat-forming herbs to 10 cm high. Leaves spirodistichous; sheaths without distinct auricles; pseudopetiole shorter than blade, slightly concave, 2-14 mm long; blade 3-25 mm long, 0.5-1.6 mm wide, densely covered adaxially with stomates between 3-6 usually obvious ribs; apex acute or obtuse. Inflorescence with 1-3 or rarely 4 spikelets. Spikelets 4-8 (rarely to 11) mm long. Glumes usually 3 (2-4), whitish with green apex to pale brown, occasionally tinged red-brown; outermost glume 3.5-10 mm long; innermost glume 3.4-5.5 mm long. Scales straw-coloured to orange-brown. Anthers 2-3 mm long. Nut ovoid, with truncate or obtuse apex, 1.2-1.7 mm long, 0.7-1.1 mm diam., pale red-brown.

Flowering: summer.

Distribution and occurrence: South from Brindabella Range. Also in similar habitats in Vic and Tas. Grows beside streams and lakes in subalpine and alpine areas; NSW subdivisions: ST. Other Australian states: Vic. Tas.