

*Chloris virgata* Swartz, FEATHER FINGER GRASS, FEATHER WINDMILL GRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted, many-stemmed at base, cespitose, decumbent to ascending, terminating in an erect, umbel-like (digitate) compound inflorescence, 25–50+ cm tall; shoots frequently branched or rooting at nodes. **Stems (culms):** ± cylindric, to 2–3 mm diameter, finely striped, often bent from each node, smooth, glabrous; solid. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, keeled, smooth, with or without long silky hairs near collar, the collar glabrous or short-hairy on lower surface, lacking lobes (auricles) at top; ligule membranous, truncate, < 1 mm long, pubescent on outer surface, short-fringed on margin; blade linear, 120–220(–280) × 3–9(–15) mm, the widest near the base, ± flat, minutely toothed on margins, glabrous or coarsely long-hairy at base (hairs to 4 mm long), parallel-veined with midrib conspicuously raised on lower surface, minutely scabrous. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal, umbel-like panicle, panicle of 5–15 erect, spikelike branches, the branches (40–)50–80(–100) mm long, 1-sided (upper side), with 2 rows of overlapping, spikelet with 2 florets, > 10 spikelets per 10 mm, bracteate, awned; peduncle scapelike, glabrous; branch axis tomentose at base, somewhat wavy, triangular in x-section, short-barbed along exposed edge, green, short stalk subtending spikelet silky-hairy. **Spikelet:** strongly compressed side-to-side, lower floret bisexual, upper floret sterile, breaking above glumes, awned, in fruit turning dark gray or black; **glumes** 2, unequal, membranous and 1-veined, minutely serrate along vein, narrowly lanceolate, lower glume 1.5–2.5 mm long, upper glume 2.5–4.3 mm long including short awn (to 0.7 mm long), keeled, upper glume notched at awn; callus with tuft of hairs below lower lemma; **lemma** of fertile floret compressed-oblongate, 2.5–3.2(–3.5) mm long + awn, keeled with a conspicuous bulge in keel above midpoint, 3-veined with a longitudinal groove on each surface, acuminate and minutely 2-toothed at tip, lower keel glabrous or appressed-hairy, above midpoint with ascending hairs ca. 2.5 mm long aging longer and spreading, often purplish red on 1 margin at bases of long hairs, the awn subterminal, straight or bent, 5–7 mm long; **lemma** of sterile floret narrowly wedge-shaped, ca. 2 mm long, inflated and not keeled, 3-veined, truncate, sometimes purplish red, short-ciliate, minutely 2-toothed at tip, typically glabrous, the awn straight, 4–5 mm long; **palea** of fertile floret membranous, enclosed by and ≤ lemma, strongly 2-keeled and depressed between keels and folded membranous edges, ca. 2.5 mm long, often minutely ciliate along keel approaching tip, purplish red and short-ciliate at tip, internally with midridge; **palea** of upper floret vestigial to spatulate and inrolled. **Flower:** bisexual; **perianth (lodicules)** 2, linear, 0.5 mm long, white; **stamens** 3, free; filaments threadlike, ca. 2.5 mm long, white; anthers exerted at top of palea or included, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.6–0.7 mm long, whitish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, fusiform, white, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, exerted slightly laterally, ascending or appressed, 1.1–1.4 mm long, reddish. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), fusiform, 1.5–2 mm long, glossy and translucent-amber, glabrous; dispersed as unit of the 2 awned lemmas + paleas, dark gray to blackish and showing long hairs of lemmas and shorter hairs of callus at base. Mid-summer–early September.

Naturalized. Annual collected in disturbed sites in the SH and SMM. *Chloris virgata* is a widespread weed throughout the Southwest and should be expected in range where horses are kept. As in related genera of grasses, *Chloris* has ascending branches in umbel-like

(digitate) arrangement, with the spikelets arranged in two overlapping rows on the upper (inward-facing) side of the axis. In this species the lower floret of the spikelet is bisexual and the upper floret is sterile.

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