

Agrostis capillaris

COMMON NAME

browntop

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Agrostis capillaris L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

AGRCAP

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Plant of coastal, lowland, montane and subalpine habitats (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). The plant is able to grow on poor soils of low fertility (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Plant usually outcompeted on high fertility sites (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). The plant is prevalent on the heavy soils of the Wairarapa (Hilgendorf 1926). Plant found in scrub and forest margin, both short and tall tussocklands, herbfields, fernlands, sanddunes and river beds (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). The plant is found in cultivated lands and pasture communities (Hilgendorf 1926).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted perennial grass to 70 cm tall, all parts hairless, dark to bluish-green. **Roots** with rhizomes, occ stolons. **Leaf-blade** flat, short and narrow, 100–150 × 1–5 mm; ribs regular, margins slightly rough. **Ligule** short, membranous and translucent, almost invisible. **Leaf-sheath** rounded, usually smooth. **Emerging leaf** rolled. **Seedhead** open, usually up to 15 cm long with spreading branches, fine, light brown, seeds tiny, brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

The plant has delicate feathery brown flower heads about 45 cm tall (Hilgendorf 1926). The plant has slender underground stems that give off numerous shoots and so forms a very close turf under lawn conditions (Hilgendorf 1926).

FLOWERING

December, January

FRUITING

mid-late April

YEAR NATURALISED

1867



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ORIGIN

Europe, Temperate Asia

ETYMOLOGY

agrostis: Greek name for a kind of grass

capillaris: From the Latin capillus 'hair' or 'thread', meaning hair-like or thread-like

Reason For Introduction

Agricultural

Life Cycle Comments

Perennial. Vegetatively spreading perennial, predominantly outcrossing; tetraploid (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

Reproduction

Sexual and Asexual

Seed

yes (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

Dispersal

Seed dispersed by wind, water, humans and vertebrates (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

Tolerances

Tolerant of drought and frost, slightly tolerant to shade and poor drainage (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Hilgendorf FW. 1926. Weeds of New Zealand and how to eradicate them. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, Christchurch, NZ.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/agrostis-capillaris/>