

# Gahnia lacera

## COMMON NAME

cutty grass

## SYNONYMS

Lampocarya lacera A.Rich.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Gahnia lacera (A.Rich.) Steud.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

GAHLAC

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island from Te Paki south to about Awakino in the west and East Cape in the East.

## HABITAT

Coastal to lowland (rarely extending up to 500 m a.s.l. in mountain ranges close to the sea). Colonising a variety of substrates which may be seasonally waterlogged though otherwise dry. Usually found in scrub or open forest.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, bambusiform, perennial sedge forming dense, yellowish-green tufts. **Rhizome** shortly creeping, 5–8 mm diameter, very hard, lignaceous, long persistent when dead. **Culms** 0.6–2.0 m, 2–4 but up to 6 mm diameter at the base. **Leaves** numerous, almost all cauline and  $\geq$  culms; lamina up to 380 mm long and 9 mm wide, yellow-green, green or dark green, flat or involute, glabrous, margins scabrid; sheaths all closely appressed to and enclosing base of culm, rugose above, maturing dark brown to almost black, smooth and glossy towards the node. **Panicle** 20–600  $\times$  30–60 mm, rigid, usually erect, many-flowered, light brown with branchlets 20–160 mm long, usually in dense though more or less distant clusters along the axis of the panicle. **Spikelets** 1-flowered, 8 mm long, alternate on the branchlets, sessile or shortly stalked. **Glumes** 4–5; the outer 2–3 light red-brown; inner glumes pale cream, with a red lacerate apex. **Stamens** 4. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** 3.5–4.5 mm long, slightly  $<$  2 mm diameter, oblong-ellipsoid or oblong-obovoid, lustrous black, with a minute apiculate apex, endocarp obscurely transverse striate within.



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## SIMILAR TAXA

Immediately distinguished from all other *Gahnia* species and *Morelotia affinis* (Brong.) Blake by the rhizomatous habit, and stout, bamboo-like culms.

## FLOWERING

July–November

## FRUITING

Fruits may be present throughout the year

## LIFE CYCLE

Florets are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be difficult to cultivate. The seed is difficult to germinate, and plants resent root disturbance and usually die if transplanted. However, considerable success has been achieved growing plants and/or germinating seed in untreated saw dust. Despite these problems this is an attractive species well worth attempting to grow. Once established it flourishes in a range of conditions but does best in full sun in a well drained or only seasonally wet soil.

## ETYMOLOGY

**gahnia**: After Gahn

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 October 2005). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Gardner RO. 1996. *Gahnia pauciflora* and *G. procera* and a note on *G. lacera*. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 51: 7–10.

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/gahnia-lacera/>