

Isolepis cernua var. cernua

COMMON NAME

slender clubrush

SYNONYMS

Isolepis pygmaea (Vahl) Kunth; *Scirpus cernuus* Vahl; *Fimbristylis pygmaeum* Vahl

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Isolepis cernua (Vahl) Roem. & Schult. var. *cernua*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

ISOCVC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand. Almost cosmopolitan but apparently absent from S.E. Asia.

HABITAT

Mostly coastal on damp sand, or peat within sand flats, dune slacks, fringing lagoons and slow flowing brackish water, on coastal rocks and boulder beaches. More rarely inland around lake margins, and in peat bogs (especially restiad bogs).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Variable in size, in dense tufts or with a shortly branched ascending rhizome. **Culms** 20–200 mm long, usually c. 0.5 mm. diameter or less, but occasionally up to 1 mm diameter. **Leaves** 1–4 or 0, \pm = culms, or much < culms, c. 0.5 mm wide, or often reduced to shortly mucronate sheaths; sheaths dark red-purple at the base, lighter brown towards the truncate orifice. **Inflorescence** of 1–(2–3) spikelets; subtending bract \pm = or usually slightly > spikelets, 3–25 mm long, setaceous or leaf-like, caducous. **Spikelets** 2.0–5.0 \times 1.0–2.5 mm, elliptical, obtuse, almost white, or green, or with red-brown markings. **Glumes** 1–2 mm. long, broadly ovate, only slightly concave with keel not prominent, obtuse, green to very pale straw coloured, or with red-brown markings at the sides, margins entire, membranous, rounded towards the tip, or with the keel at tip of glume somewhat thickened and \pm excurrent, lateral nerves conspicuous. **Hypogynous bristles** 0. **Stamens** 3, rarely 2 or 1 in occasional glumes. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** us. slightly < 1 mm. long, but occasionally slightly > 1 mm., c. 0.5 mm. wide, obovoid or occasionally elliptical-obovoid, plano-convex, or subtrigonal and obtusely angled at the back, rounded at the tip and sharply apiculate, red-brown or dark grey at maturity, minutely but very distinctly reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

An extremely variable species, *Isolepis cernua* is generally easily recognised by its preference for coastal habitats (but it can occur well inland as well); leaves usually < culms; stamens mostly 3 per glume, trigonal red-brown or dark brown nut; and by the glume margins and nut with are rounded toward the apex.

FLOWERING

August–December (may be present throughout the year)

FRUITING

October–May (may be present throughout the year)

LIFE CYCLE

Nuts are dispersed by water and possibly granivory and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of whole plants. Once established rather tolerant of a range of conditions but flourishes best in full sun in a permanently damp soil. An attractive pot plant.

ETYMOLOGY

isolepis: From the Greek isos (equal) and lepis (scale)

cernua: Drooping

ATTRIBUTION

Description from Moore and Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson AT, Smith HA. 1986. Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.

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.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/isolepis-cernua-var-cernua/>