

Aciphylla aurea

COMMON NAME

golden spaniard, golden speargrass

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Aciphylla aurea W.R.B.Oliv.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

ACIAUR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Robust yellowish-green golden large spikey clumps to 1 m with a tall robust very spikey flower head

HABITAT

Montane to low alpine well-drained or arid sites including rocky areas, dry grassland and tussock grassland. 300-1500 m.

FEATURES

Very robust tufted yellowish-green herb to 1.5 m tall when in flower. Rosettes single or multiple, to 1 m diameter. Leaves many, stout, 1-pinnate to irregularly 2-pinnate (sometimes only 1 secondary pinna developed), to 70 cm long; sheath thick with thin margins, yellow or yellowish-green, 25 mm wide at apex; stipules stout, to 27 cm long x 5-8 mm wide, tapering, pungent; petioles c. 10-20 cm long x 10-16 mm wide; margins finely serrulate on cartilaginous margin; internodes (inter-pinna spacing) 5-6 cm long; primary pinnae 2-4 pairs, spaced, flat, striate, midrib obscure, c. 20 cm long x 7 mm wide, abruptly narrowing to pungent point; secondary pinnae little shorter, pungent. Flowering stem of male and female similar (female narrower and darker), stout, ribbed, 80 cm or more long, bracted along most of length; bracts +/- erect in male, spreading in female; lower bracts without flowers, yellow; lower bract sheaths to 8 x 1.5 cm tapering to c. 9 mm wide, thin, smooth; lower bract stipules to 8 cm long x 2-3 mm wide, acicular; lower bract lamina usually simple, sometimes bifid, to 22 cm long x 4 mm wide, acicular. Umbels of male plants distributed along peduncle; involucre bracts linear, longer than rays. Umbels of female plants on peduncles up to 15 cm long; umbellules crowded on short rays; involucre bracts linear. Fruit of two mericarps; mericarps oblong-elliptic to elliptic, (3.5-)4.0-6.0(-6.5) mm, with 3-4 narrowly winged ribs and 1-2 reduced to low ridges, vittae obscured



Old Man Range, December. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Kakanui Mountains. Photographer: John Barkla

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *Aciphylla colensoi* which has much shorter stipules and crowded pinnae on leaves and also *A. horrida* which has usually 1-pinnate leaves and inflorescences very broad at the base

FLOWERING

November-December

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Yellow

FRUITING

January-February

ETYMOLOGY

aciphylla: From the Latin *acicula* 'needle' and the Greek *phyllum* 'leaf', meaning needle-leaf.

aurea: Golden yellow

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted by Mike Thorsen from Allan (1961), Mark and Adams (1995), Webb and Simpson (2001) and Wilson (1996).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961. *Flora of New Zealand*. Government Printer, Wellington;
Mark, A.F.; Adams, N.M. 1995. *New Zealand alpine plants*, 2nd Edition. Godwit Publishing, Auckland;
Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309
Webb, C.J. & Simpson, M.J.A. 2001. *Seeds of NZ gymnosperms and dicotyledons*. Manuka Press, Christchurch;
Wilson, H.D. 1996. *Wild plants of Mount Cook National Park*. Manuka Press, Christchurch

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/aciphylla-aurea/>