

Anthosachne aprica

COMMON NAME

Blue wheat grass

SYNONYMS

Elymus apricus Á.Löve et Connor

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Anthosachne aprica (Á.Löve et Connor) C.Yen et J.L.Yang

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

ANAAPR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Central Otago only

HABITAT

A species of inland basins where it grows in short tussock (*Festuca novae-zelandiae* (Hack.) Cockayne) grasslands at elevations of 150-200 m.

FEATURES

Erect, glaucous, and tufted. Leaf sheath 70-100 mm, keeled striate, becoming fibrous, glabrous, sparsely hairy or pubescent, margins papery. Ligule 0.3-0.5 mm, ciliate. Leaf-blade 200-300 × 2-4 mm, glaucous, flat, ribbed, sometimes involute, upper surface glabrous, or with occasional 1 mm long hairs, undersides densely hairy, lamina margin prickle-toothed, occasionally with sparse hairs up to 1 mm long. Culms 0.5-1 m, erect, nodes conspicuous, black or red-brown. Inflorescences 180-250 mm, stiff, erect, of 3-7 spreading spikelets. Spikelets 30-50 mm, each with 6-12 (or more) florets. Glumes ± equal, 5-10 mm, 3-nerved, acute or shortly awned, margins papery, ciliate. Lemma 10-14 mm, glabrous with some prickle-teeth above, apex occasionally bifid, awn 22-45 mm, recurved or straight. Palea 6-13 mm, apex bifid. Rachilla 2-3 mm, short stiff hairy. Callus 0.75 mm, incompletely and shortly bearded. Anthers 4-9 mm purple or yellow.



SIMILAR TAXA

Morphologically superficially similar to *Connorochloa tenuis*, from which it differs by the erect culms rather than long trailing culms, with the uppermost internodes short, spikelets widely spreading (divergent) from rachis, and 4-9 mm long, purple to yellow anthers. *Anthosachne aprica* is a stout grass with conspicuous erect flower heads bearing long-awned spikes that are held at a distinct angle to the stem. Aside from *Connorochloa* it could possibly be confused with some exotic *Bromus* spp. that also have long awns (but these often have hairy leaves, and green rather than blue-green coloured spikes, and the edges of the spikes are sharply delineated, not rounded as in *Anthosachne*. This species previously regarded as an *Elymus* is now accepted as a member of *Anthosachne* (see Barksworth & Jacobs (2011)).

FLOWERING

October - February

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, Yellow

FRUITING

November - April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Dislikes humidity and does best in full sun, in a well drained soil.

THREATS

A local endemic, that while not believe to be threatened occupies a very narrowly defined range that is ever increasingly vulnerable to loss of habita through the expansion of the wine industry in Central Otago

ETYMOLOGY

aprica: From the Latin aperire 'open', meaning uncovered

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange June 2005. Feature description adapted from Edgar & Connor (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Barkworth, M.E.; Jacobs, S.W.L. 2011: The Triticeae (Gramineae) in Australasia. *Telopea* 13: 37-56.

Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. V. Lincoln, Manaaki Whenua Press.

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 11: 285-309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/anthosachne-aprica/>