Anthosachne kingiana subsp. multiflora

COMMON NAMES
blue grass, blue wheat grass

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Grasses

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Tufted, stoloniferous, glaucous to green grass. **Leaf-sheath** 6–10 mm, striate, glabrous or retrorsely short hairy. **Ligule** 0.2–0.5 mm, margin frayed. **Leaf-blade** 100–200 × 2–4 mm, flat bright green or glaucous, ribbed, underside with small antrorse teeth or glabrous, upper with antrorse short hairs or prickle-teeth on ribs, margin shortly prickle-toothed. **Culm** 300–600(–900) mm, erect, suberect or drooping. Inflorescence 100–250 mm, of up to 6–15 spikelets. **Spikelets** 14–25 mm, of 7–12 florets. **Glumes** ± equal, 5–9 mm, 3–5-nerved, keeled, broad, margins papery, ciliate; keel and nerves prickle-toothed, sometimes extending into a short awn. **Lemma** apex often bifid, awn absent or about length of lemma. **Palea** 9–12 mm, apex truncate, retuse, ciliate. **Rachilla** 1–2.5 mm, hairy. **Callus** 0.75–1 mm, with scattered short hairs. **Anthers** 3–5 mm, purple or yellow.

Maunganui area, Northland. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 16/12/2015, Licence: Public domain.

SIMILAR TAXA
Not closely allied to any of the endemic New Zealand species and unlikely to be confused with any of them. Long-awned forms could be confused with short-awned variants of *Anthosachne solandri*, but the awns in that species are recurved never straight.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. In New Zealand present from the Three Kings Islands south throughout the North Island to the South Island from Nelson to Banks Peninsula. Also present in Eastern Australia.

HABITAT
Primarily a coastal species of cliff faces, and rocky ground, utilising rocks of various substrates but showing a decided preference for base-rich substrates such as limestone, calcareous mudstone, siltstone and sandstones, basalt or the zeolite-rich facies of greywacke. On offshore islands it occasionally grows on open clay pans.

THREATS
North Island populations have declined a lot and now not commonly found unless in little pockets. Competition from weeds is a major issue.

GENUS
Anthosachne

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Anthosachne kingiana subsp. multiflora (Banks et Sol. ex Hook.f.) Govaerts

SYNONYMS
Triticum multiflorum Hook.f., Agropyron multiflorum (Hook.f.) Cheeseman, A. kirkii Zotov, A. multiflorum var. longisetum Hack., A. kirkii var. longisetum (Hack.) Zotov, Elymus multiflorus var. longisetus (Hack.) Á.Löve et Connor; Elymus multiflorus (Hook.f.) Á.Löve et Connor subsp. multiflorus; Anthosachne multiflora (Hook.f.) C.Yen et J.L.Yang subsp. multiflora

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September–February

FRUITING
October–May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Florets are dispersed by wind and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Likes a sunny aspect in free draining soil. The long-awned froms are especially attractive.

WHERE TO BUY
Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries.

ETYMOLOGY
multiflora: From late Latin, feminine of multiflorus meaning ‘bearing many flowers’

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to the grasses of New Zealand

NVS CODE
ANTKSM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, SO
2012 | Data Deficient
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, RR Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Barkworth ME, Jacobs SWL. 2011: The Triticeae (Gramineae) in Australasia. *Telopea* 13: 37–56.
Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.
Govaerts R. 2014. New combinations for Philip Island wheat grass, *Anthosachne kingiana* subsp. *kingiana* (Poaceae). *Journal of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens 27*: 23–24.

ATTRIBUTION

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/anthosachne-kingiana-subsp-multiflora/

PDF DATE

27 May 2026