Austroderia fulvida

COMMON NAME
kakaho

SYNONYMS
Arundo fluvida Buchanan; Arundo conspicua var. fulvida (Buchanan) Kirk; Cortaderia fulvida (Buchanan) Zotov

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Austroderia fulvida (Buchanan) N.P.Barker et H.P.Linder

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Grasses

NVS CODE
AUSFUL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 90

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Coastal to montane robust tussock. Near the coast (cliffs, stream and road banks, occasionally dunes) it commences flowering in October but later - Dec-Jan) around e.g., the Volcanic Plateau.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island - throughout but generally scarce north of Auckland, where most populations attributed to A. fulvida are of the small 'Northland race' which may prove to be another species; also Marlborough in the South Island.

HABITAT
Found from the coast to montane areas. Common alongside streams, lake margins, in damp spots within forest clearings, seepages, dunes and on hillsides, including sea cliffs. In the Central North Island is often found bordering with forestry roads and logging tracks.

Hairs along inner margin; outer margin scabrid from prickle-teeth. Remutaka Rail Trail. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

Austroderia fulvida. Photographer: Wayne Bennett

FEATURES
Robust, stout, tussock-forming grass up to 3.5 m tall when in flower (but see under distinguishing features). Leaf sheath glabrous, green, copiously covered in white wax. Ligule 1 mm. Collar light brown, glabrous. Leaf blade 1-2(-3) m x 2 cm, green, dark-green, often somewhat glaucous, upper side glabrous, surface rather harsh due to numerous prickle-teeth, undersides glabrous except near and on leaf margins where long, deciduous hairs are present, these grading into prickle teeth toward leaf apex. Culm up to 3.5 m, inflorescence portion up to 1 m tall, pendant, plumose. Spikelets numerous, 20 mm with 2-3 florets per spikelet. Glumes equal, 15 mm, < or equal to florets. Lemma 1 mm, 3-nerved, scabrid. Palea 4.5 mm, keels ciliate. Callus hairs 1.5 mm. Rachilla 0.5 mm. Flowers either perfect or female. Anthers of perfect flowers 3.8 mm, in females 2 mm. Ovary of perfect flowers 0.6 mm, stigma -styles 1.8 mm; female flowers with ovary 0.8 mm, stigma-style 2.5 mm. Seed 1.5-2 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA
Generally smaller in stature than *Austroderia toetoe* and flower heads appear earlier when the two species grow together or in the same climatic zone. Can grow in drier sites than *A. toetoe*. Recognised by the distinctive tussock growth form, the leaf blade being glabrous above the ligule; ligule 1 mm, and by the absence of a contra-ligule.
In Northland two forms of *Austroderia fulvida* occur, the large robust form which encompasses the type is scarce, whilst the other, seemingly endemic to Northland differs by its smaller stature. Beyond stature there seem to be no other distinctions.

FLOWERING
September - November (later at higher altitudes e.g. Dec-Jan in central North Island)

FLOWER COLOURS
Cream, White

FRUITING
October - March

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed (as a revegation exercise ripe seed heads can be pinned to soil surface, and if kept damp, soon germinate) and division of established plants.

THREATS
Abundant and not threatened. Often naturalising in suitable habitats.

ETYMOLOGY
fulvida: Yellow

WHERE TO BUY
Commonly cultivated. Plants are often sold for revegetation purposes by specialist native plant nurseries.

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE
Often used in habitat restoration, where it is ideal for protecting stream sides and roadside banks. However, in some parts of the country it has been used excessively, often with little regard as to its native range and habitat preferences, such that it now poses a risk to other allied Austroderia species indigenous to these areas because of the potential for hybridism, and through competition.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2006. Description adapted from Edgar & Connor (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Whenua Press, Christchurch.
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/austroderia-fulvida/