

Austroderia richardii

COMMON NAME

toetoe

SYNONYMS

Arundo richardii Endl.; *Arundo kakao* Steud.; *Arundo australis* A.Rich.; *Gynerium zeelandicum* Steud.; *Cortaderia richardii* (Endl.) Zotov

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Austroderia richardii (Endl.) 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

AUSRIC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 90

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Confined to the South Island. Possibly in the North Island, east of Cape Palliser. Naturalised in Tasmania.

HABITAT

Abundant, from the coast to subalpine areas. Common along stream banks, river beds, around lake margins, and in other wet places. Also found in sand dunes, especially along the Foveaux Strait.

FEATURES

Tall, gracile, slender tussock-forming grass up to 3 m tall when flowering. Leaf sheath glabrous, green, covered in white wax. Ligule 3.5 mm. Collar brown, basally glabrous, upper surface with short, stiff hairs surmounting ribs. Leaf blade 2-3 x 0.25 m, green, dark-green, often somewhat glaucous, upper side with thick weft of hairs at base, otherwise sparsely hairy up midrib with abundant, minute prickle teeth throughout. Undersurface with leaf with 5 mm long hairs near leaf margins, otherwise harshly scabrid. Culm up to 3 m, inflorescence portion up to 1 m tall, pennant-shaped, drooping, narrowly plumose. Spikelets numerous, 25 mm with 3 florets per spikelet. Glumes equal, > or equal to florets, 1- or 3-nerved. Lemma 10 mm, scabrid. Palea 6 mm, keels ciliate. Callus hairs 2 mm. Rachilla 1 mm, glabrous. Flowers either perfect (anthers 4.5 mm) or female (3 mm). Ovary 1 mm (perfect), stigma -styles 2.5 mm; female flowers with ovary 1.3 mm, stigma-style 4 mm. Seed 3-4 mm.



Cortaderia richardii. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Southland Plains. Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft

SIMILAR TAXA

Closest to *Austroderia toetoe* form which it is best distinguished by the green rather than ivory leaf-sheaths, and by the green rather than ivory culm internodes. Also recognisable by the very slender, gracile leaves, culms and inflorescences. The inflorescences in this species are rather beautiful and resemble fine, narrow, pennants. Around the Foveaux Strait area and at Mason Bay, Stewart Island, some populations of *A. richardii* are distinctly rhizomatous.

FLOWERING

September - November

FRUITING

October - March

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed (as a revegetation 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

richardii: Named after Achille Richard (1794-1852) - a French botanist who described several New Zealand plant species

WHERE TO BUY

Commonly cultivated in the South Island, and offered by many specialist native plant nurseries. Not commonly cultivated in the North Island.

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-richardii/>