Austroderia splendens

COMMON NAME
Toetoe

SYNONYMS
Cortaderia splendens Connor

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Austroderia splendens (Connor) 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
AUSSPL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 90

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. A northern species common from the Three Kings Islands south to about Waikawau in the west and Ohiwa Harbour in the east - exact southern limit unclear.

HABITAT
Abundant in coastal situations, within dunefield, associated shrublands, on cliff faces and on offshore islands.

FEATURES
Generally a robust, stout, rhizomatous tussock forming grass up to 6 m tall when in flower. Leaf sheath clothed in long hairs, pale green, copiously covered in white wax. Ligule 3 (or more) mm long, contra-ligule (a long in hairs at the leaf blade/culm junction) present. Leaf blade 2-3(-4.8) x 0.3-0.5 m, yellow-green, green to dark-green, upper side glabrous, underside basally with dense weft of hairs, this becoming sparse toward midribs, trending toward mintuely hairy throughout. Culm up to 6 m, inflorescence portion up to 1 m tall, erect to nodding, plumose. Spikelets numerous, 40 mm with 2-3 florets per spikelet. Glumes equal, 40 mm with awn-like apex, > florets. Lemma 11 mm, 3-nerved, scabrid. Palea 9 mm, keels ciliate. Callus hairs 4 mm. Rachilla 1 mm. Flowers either perfect or female. Anthers of perfect flowers 6 mm, in females 4 mm. Ovary of perfect flowers 0.7 mm, stigma -styles 2 mm; female flowers with ovary 1 mm, stigma-style 4 mm. Seed 4-5 mm.
SIMILAR TAXA
This species can be distinguished from the other native Austroderia species best by the leaf blade, which is densely hairy above the ligule, and by the 3 mm (or more) long ligule, and presence of a contra-ligule. For distinctions from the naturalised Cortaderia see notes under Austroderia toetoe.

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 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
splendens: Splendid

WHERE TO BUY
Uncommon in cultivation. Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries.

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE
Two ecotypes exist, a small form typical of coastal cliff faces and rocky islets, and a robust form confined to active and semi-consolidated dune field. The robust form, from which the type specimen was selected, is rhizomatous, and produces very large (2-3(-6) m) culms which push through sand, and so in cultivation can be recognised because the culms soon flop and fall over without support. The small ecotype (which some consider as a distinct, as yet undescribed species) is not rhizomatous, and has a more compact growth form, otherwise in leaf, ligule, flower, and seed characters it matches the robust form.

ATTRIBUTION

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

CITATION
Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Austroderia splendens Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroderia-splendens/ (Date website was queried)

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