

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 minutely 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.



Cortaderia splendens. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Lake Morehurehu. Photographer: Lisa Forester

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 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

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

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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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroderia-splendens/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroderia-splendens/>