

Chara fibrosa

COMMON NAME

Stonewort

FAMILY

Characeae

AUTHORITY

Chara fibrosa (Agardh ex Bruzelius) R.D. Wood

FLORA CATEGORY

Non-vascular – Native

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small branched spiny submerged plant looking like a miniature pine tree.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South Island. Widespread globally.

HABITAT

Oligotrophic lakes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Aquatic, submerged, macro-algae. Spinose appearance, with outward-facing, spine-like cells on branchlet whorls and central stems. Branches are not forked. Stems are covered by a secondary cell layer (cortication), making them more resistant to physical damage. Accessory cells at junctions between branchlet cells are long and spine-like. Stems are anchored in the sediment by colourless rhizoids. Plant is monoecious, with antheridia and oogonia on the same plant often located together, and with fruiting bodies dispersed over the upper stem portions.

SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from *Lamprothamnium macropogon* by having spreading spine-like cells all over the stems, compared to downward pointing spines around the branchlet whorl only in the brackish water species.

FRUITING

Produces large (>500µm long) black oospores that are round in transverse section. Oospore has 7-9 sinistral spiralling ridges.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Fragments or oospores.

ETYMOLOGY

chara: Origin unknown, possibly from the Greek charis 'grace' or 'beauty'

fibrosa: Fibrous, from the Latin fibra; matted fibrous trunk

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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de Winton, M.D.; Dugdale, A.M.; Clayton, J.S. (2007). An identification key for oospores of the extant charophytes of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*:463-476

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chara-fibrosa/>

