

Deschampsia pusilla

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Deschampsia pusilla Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

DESPUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. It has been recorded only from the Central Otago mountains.

HABITAT

A species of high alpine habitats in fell field, around tarns and in seepages. Often associated with small cushion plants.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Compact, leafy grass, 2–4.5(–10) cm tall. **Leaf-sheath** wider than leaf-blade, light-brownish grey, with few inconspicuous veins. **Ligule** (1.5–)2(–3.5) mm, tapered to an acute tip. **Leaves** 5.5–17 × 0.3–0.5 mm long, in-rolled, narrow smooth with finely toothed leaf margins, apex rounded (subobtusely). **Culm** (stem) 1.2–2.5(–4) cm, branched at base, often buried amongst leaves. **Panicle** (flowering spike) (5–)8–5(–18) mm, compact, branches few, these minutely scabrid (with small teeth). **Spikelets** 2.2–3 mm, greenish, shining. **Glumes** more or less equal in length and size of spikelets, keels sparsely scabrid above, tip subacute, acute, almost spine-tipped (mucronate), lower 1-nerved, upper 3-nerved. **Lemna** 1.5–2.2 mm, faintly 5-nerved, oblong, 4–5-toothed with short terminal spine (mucro) 0.3–0.5 mm. **Palea** less than or equal to lemma, apex deeply cleft, keels finely scabrid. **Anthers** (0.3–)0.5(–0.6) mm. **Seed** c. 1 × 0.4 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)



Old Man Range, Otago. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Deschampsia pusilla has no close relatives, and is unlikely to be confused with other associated grasses in the habitats it occupies.

FLOWERING

No information available

FRUITING

No information available

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

No information available.

THREATS

Because of its small size, and restriction to high alpine situations in remote parts of Central Otago, this species is only known from a small number of collections. It may be common in these habitats but until comprehensive surveys are undertaken the exact status remains uncertain.

ETYMOLOGY

deschampsia: After Deschamps

pusilla: Small

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 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/deschampsia-pusilla/>