

Festuca matthewsii subsp. aquilonia

COMMON NAMES

northern blue fescue

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular


STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stiff scabrid leaved tussock with scabrid inflorescences of wide-angled branches of awned spikelets borne high above circular or hexagonal glaucous leaves. **Leaf-sheath** 50–150 mm, glabrous or minutely scabrid, keeled, stramineous, margins membranous, brown below; apical auricles 0.3–0.7 mm, ciliate. **Collar** usually swollen. **Leaf-blade** 150–300 × 0.5–0.7 mm, glaucous, hexagonal and ribbed or terete, abaxially minutely or strongly antrorsely prickly-toothed sometimes glabrous, adaxially with abundant short white antrorse hairs on ribs and margins. **Culm** 300–700 mm, usually greatly exceeding leaf-blades, nodes sometimes geniculate, uppermost conspicuous, upper internodes sparsely prickly-toothed or glabrous. **Panicle** 70–150 mm with 6–9 nodes, of 8–25 spikelets; open wide-angled pulvinate branches sometimes contracted or becoming so, naked below, basal branch solitary with 2–7 spikelets, uppermost 4–6 spikelets solitary on short pedicels; rachis, branches and pedicels with abundant small prickly-teeth especially on convex surfaces, longer prickly-teeth on margins. **Spikelets** 10.0–15.0 × 4.5 mm, of 4–9 florets. **Glumes** unequal, keeled with prickly-teeth above, centrally green-bronze, margins pale membranous, ciliate; lower 3.4–5.0 mm, 1-nerved, triangular acute, upper 4.5–7.0 mm, 3-nerved, long triangular acute to obovate acute. **Lemmas** 4.5–7.0 mm, lobes small (0.05 mm) or 0, rounded below becoming keeled above, sparsely scabrid on margin below and near awn; awn 0.5–1–2 mm. **Palea** 5–7 mm, frequently > lemma, apex deeply bifid, ciliate, keels toothed $\frac{1}{2}$ – or more, interkeel hairs above, margins of flanks ciliate above. **Callus** 0.2–0.3 mm, margins sparsely bearded, articulation ± flat. **Rachilla** 1.0–1.5 mm, hairy, hairs short and stiff. **Lodicules** 0.8–1.1 mm, > ovary, often hair-tipped. **Anthers** 2.50–3.75 mm, yellow or purpled. **Ovary** 0.50–0.75 mm, hispid hairs at apex; stigma-styles 1.8–2.5 mm. **Seed** 3–3.5 mm.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (North-West Nelson (Mt Benson), central and southern Nelson from St Arnaud to Lewis Pass, Marlborough, Wairau Mountains and Richmond Range).

HABITAT

Subalpine and alpine tussock grasslands.

GENUS

Festuca

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Festuca matthewsii subsp. aquilonia Connor



SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1998)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An attractive grass tolerant of most conditions but dislikes humidity.

ETYMOLOGY

festuca: From the Latin festuca 'stem' or 'blade of grass'

matthewsii: After Mathews

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

FESMSA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/festuca-matthewsii-subsp-aquilonia/>

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