

# Festuca matthewsii subsp. latifundii



## COMMON NAMES

southern 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

Glaucous tussock with scabrid leaves and tall culms bearing reflexed branches of large spikelets. **Leaf-sheath** 30–100 mm, glabrous, margins membranous; apical auricles 0.4–1.0 mm, ciliate, approximately equal to ligule. **Leaf-blade** 80–300 × 0.5–0.9 mm, terete to ± hexagonal, undersides with short antrorse prickles especially on ribs, upper surface and margins with abundant longer white antrorse hairs. **Culm** 200–800 mm, usually exerted high above leaves, nodes dark, evident, internodes smooth but sometimes antrorsely scabrid. **Panicle** 60–180 mm, erect with 6–8 nodes, 10–20 spikelets; branches solitary or often binate, naked below, pulvinate and reflexed, basal branch 15–80 mm of 2–6 spikelets, uppermost 2–4 spikelets solitary on 2–4 mm pedicels; rachis margins prickletoothed sometimes smooth below, branches and pedicels prickletoothed on margins. **Spikelets** 10–16 × 4–6 mm, of 5–7 florets. **Glumes** unequal, keels sometimes prickletoothed, centrally green, brown or reddish, margins ciliate; lower 3.0–5.5 mm, 1-nerved, upper 3.5–6.5 mm, 3-nerved. **Lemma** 5–8 mm, 5-nerved, glaucous, keeled, smooth except for prickles at apex, margin antrorsely hairy; awn 1–3 mm. **Palea** 5.0–7.5 mm, usually greater than or equal to lemma, deeply bifid, keels toothed in upper ½ or more, interkeel hairs at apex, margins of flanks hairy above. **Callus** 0.2–0.3 mm, margin sparsely bearded; articulation ± oblique. **Rachilla** 1.0–1.5 mm, abundantly short stiff hairy. **Lodicules** 0.7–1.4 mm, usually hair-tipped. **Anthers** 3.0–4.2 mm, yellow to purple. **Ovary** 0.6–1.0 mm, hispid hairs at apex; stigma-styles 1.2–2.0 mm. **Seed** 2–3 mm.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Waitaki Basin and Central Otago – excluding the Dunstan, Pisa, and Old Man Ranges).

## HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine and in intermontane basins. A major component of tussock grasslands on hills and plains.

## GENUS

Festuca

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

Festuca matthewsii subsp. latifundii 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

FESMSL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NR, NStr, TL Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

## 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-latifundii/>

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