

# Festuca multinodis

## COMMON NAMES

creeping fescue

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## FLOWER COLOURS

Orange, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Scrambling, prostrate, ± ascending or sometimes densely caespitose, glaucous grass with many-leaved vegetative shoots and inflorescences exceeding these. **Branching** extravaginal. **Leaf-sheath** 30–100 mm, glabrous, ribbed, manifestly broader than leaf-blade, becoming fibrous with evident white nerves; apical auricles 0.2–0.7 mm, rounded, ciliate. **Ligule** 0.2–0.5 mm, flat to ± triangular between auricles, ciliate. **Collar** scarcely or ± thickened. **Leaf-blade** 50–250 × 0.3–0.9 mm, weakly hexagonal and ribbed, often terete usually secund, glaucous, smooth except for prickle-teeth at apex, adaxially and on margins antrorsely short white hairy becoming less so above. **Culm** 200–500 mm, greatly exceeding leaf-blades, nodes brown to purple-brown usually geniculate, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** (25–200 mm, with 5–9 nodes, 6–25 spikelets; branches spreading erect or weakly so, occasionally ± divergent, binate or solitary, basal branch (10–100 mm of 3–6 spikelets, naked below or not naked below (especially in Cook Strait), uppermost 5–6 spikelets, imbricate, solitary on short pedicels; rachis prickle-toothed often glabrous below, branches and pedicels prickle-toothed (glabrous throughout in Cook Strait); frequently tortuous below. **Spikelets** 7–20 × 3–5 mm, of 4–9 stramineous florets. **Glumes** unequal, evidently keeled, linear-oblong narrowing abruptly to an acute or mucronate apex, glabrous but occasionally prickle-toothed on keel above, apex sometimes shortly or evidently ciliate, margins membranous, ciliate above; lower 2.5–4.5 mm, 1-nerved, upper 4–6 mm, 3-nerved. **Lemma** 5–6 mm, glaucous, apex shortly lobed or 0, 5-nerved, keeled, smooth except for prickle-teeth at base and extending from callus to outer nerve below, and on keel above; awn 0 or 0.5–1.5 mm. **Palea** 4.5–6.5 mm, greater than or equal to lemma, acute, shortly bifid, keels toothed towards apex, interkeel hairs above but sometimes to base, flanks short ciliate above. **Callus** 0.3–0.5 mm, upper margins shortly bearded, less so centrally; articulation ± oblique. **Rachilla** 1.0–1.3 mm, sparsely short stiff hairy. **Lodicules** 0.7–1.5 mm, bifid or lobed, usually glabrous but occasionally hair-tipped. **Anthers** 2.0–3.0 mm, yellow to orange. **Ovary** 0.6–1.0 mm, ± turbinate, apex glabrous or with hispid hairs; stigma-styles 1.5–2.5 mm. **Seed** 3.0–3.5 mm.



*Festuca multinodis*. Photographer: Alan Stewart, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (south-west Kaimanawa Mountains, north-west Ruahine Range, Manawatu Gorge, coastal from Cape Turnagain to Cook Strait); South Island (Marlborough Sounds, Kaikoura Ranges to Waipara, North Canterbury).

## HABITAT

Coastal, otherwise montane to alpine. On rocks, cliffs and bluffs. Often on limestone.

## GENUS

Festuca

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Festuca multinodis* Petrie et Hack.

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September–December

## FRUITING

November–April

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Florets are dispersed by wind, water and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Does well in a rockery, tolerant of full sun and shade but dislikes humidity of damp conditions.

## CULTIVATION

Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

FESMUL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 56$

## 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 Data Deficient 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.  
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.

## ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/festuca-multinodis/>

## PDF DATE

08 June 2026