

Gahnia lacera

COMMON NAME

cutty grass

SYNONYMS

Lampocarya lacera A.Rich.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Gahnia lacera (A.Rich.) Steud.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

GAHLAC

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island from Te Pahi south to about Awakino in the west and East Cape in the East.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland (rarely extending up to 500 m a.s.l. in mountain ranges close to the sea). Colonising a variety of substrates which may be seasonally waterlogged though otherwise dry. Usually found in scrub or open forest.

FEATURES

Stout, bambusiform, perennial sedge forming dense, yellowish-green tufts. Rhizome shortly creeping, 5-8 mm diameter, very hard, lignaceous, long persistent when dead. Culms 0.6-2.0 m, 2-4 but up to 6 mm diameter at the base. Leaves numerous, almost all cauline and = or > culms; lamina up to 380 mm long and 9 mm wide, yellow-green, green or dark green, flat or involute, glabrous, margins scabrid; sheaths all closely appressed to and enclosing base of culm, rugose above, maturing dark brown to almost black, smooth and glossy towards the node. Panicle 20-600 x 30-60 mm, rigid, usually erect, many-flowered, light brown with branchlets 20-160 mm long, usually in dense though more or less distant clusters along the axis of the panicle. Spikelets 1-flowered, 8 mm long, alternate on the branchlets, sessile or shortly stalked. Glumes 4-5; the outer 2-3 light red-brown; inner glumes pale cream, with a red lacerate apex. Stamens 4. Style-branches 3. Nut 3.5-4.5 mm long, slightly < 2 mm diameter, oblong-ellipsoid or oblong-obovoid, lustrous black, with a minute apiculate apex, endocarp obscurely transverse striate within.



Kennedy Bay. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Kennedy Bay. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

SIMILAR TAXA

Immediately distinguished from all other *Gahnia* species and *Morelotia affinis* (Brong.) Blake by the rhizomatous habit, and stout, bamboo-like culms

FLOWERING

July - November

FRUITING

Fruits may be present throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be difficult to cultivate. The seed is difficult to germinate, and plants resent root disturbance and usually die if transplanted. However, considerable success has been achieved growing plants and/or germinating seed in untreated saw dust. Despite these problems this is an attractive species well worth attempting to grow. Once established it flourishes in a range of conditions but does best in full sun in a well drained or only seasonally wet soil.

ETYMOLOGY

gahnia: After Gahn

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 October 2005). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Gardner, R.O. 1996. *Gahnia pauciflora* and *G. procera* and a note on *G. lacera*. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 51: 7-10.

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 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/gahnia-lacera/>