

# Gahnia pauciflora

## COMMON NAME

cutting sedge

## SYNONYMS

*Gahnia hectori* Kirk; *Gahnia scaberula* Col.; *Gahnia parviflora* Col.; *Gahnia exigua* Col.; *Gahnia multiglumis* Col.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Gahnia pauciflora* Kirk

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

GAHPAU

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, South Island (where confined to Nelson and Marlborough).

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane areas (up to 800 m a.s.l. - possibly higher). usually in forest, more rarely in seral shrubland situations.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Dome Walkway. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## FEATURES

Tufted, bright-green to yellow-green perennial sedge. Rootstock short and stout. Culms 0.6-1.8 m, 2-4 mm diameter (but up to 8 mm diameter at the base), occasionally with a single longitudinal groove. Leaves more or less equal in length to culms; lamina narrow-linear, up to 12 mm wide, bright green to yellow green, undersides harshly scabrid, margins more or less involute, strongly scabrid; sheaths up to 110 mm long, dull brown. Panicle arising well above leaves, 0.45-1.20 m long, drooping, branchlets comparatively few, about 3-5, in more or less distant clusters at each node, up to 200 mm long; secondary branchlets with few spikelets. Spikelets 2-flowered, 6-9 mm long, not clustered, shortly stalked or sessile. Glumes 6-10, dark brown, rather stiff; the lower 3-6 empty, their size increasing up the spikelet; upper 3-4 glumes enclosing fruit. Stamens 4(-5). Style branches 3-4. Nut 5.5-7.0 x 2.0-3.0 mm, brownish orange or sometimes yellow-cream, apex black, fusiform, subtrigonous, often grooved, subacute, narrowed to the width of the more or less persistent style-base, occasionally scaberulous; endocarp transversely grooved within.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other *Gahnia* species by the smaller overall stature, loosely tufted habit, panicles held well above the foliage, and dark brown glumes with the lower glumes much shorter than the upper glumes. The brownish-orange or yellow-cream nuts with dark black tips are also diagnostic, and when chewed impart a distinct vanilla flavour.

## FLOWERING

September - January

## 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

**pauciflora**: Few-flowered

## 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-pauciflora/>