

# Hierochloe brunonis

## COMMON NAME

southern holy grass

## SYNONYMS

Hierochloe antarctica var. brunonis (Hook.f.) Zotov

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

Hierochloe brunonis Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

HIEBRU

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 84

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Waipapa Point near Invercargill), Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

## HABITAT

Coastal on rocky headlands, in and around sea bird roosts and nesting grounds, near seal haul outs and amongst tussock grassland.



## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Laxly tufted grass. **Leaf-sheath** glabrous, keeled, ± striate. **Ligule** 3–5 mm, membranous, rounded, undersides hairy. **Collar** thick, glabrous. **Leaf-blade** 70–300 cm × 4–8 mm, tapering, ± strict, subconvolute, subcoriaceous, abaxially and on margins glabrous, adaxially prickly-toothed on edges of and between prominent flat-topped ribs. **Culm** to 500 mm, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 50–120 mm, rather dense (often proliferous on Campbell Island), scarcely spreading, ± nodding; branches usually binate at nodes, glabrous, lower branches subtended by lanceolate bracts; pedicels to 5 mm, scabrid to pilose above. **Glumes** subequal, ovate-lanceolate, acute, membranous, almost entirely scarious, keel toothed above, 3-nerved; upper 10–14 mm. **Florets** included by glumes, light brown at maturity. **Male floret:** lemma 6–7 mm, ovate-oblong, lobes erose 2–4 mm and scarious-tipped, ± appressed long hairs on keel above shorter below, margins sparsely ciliate; awns c.6 mm, slender, ± straight, insertion c.3 mm above base; palea 5–6 mm, ciliate apex bifid, keels hairy above; lodicules 1.00–1.25 mm, ovate-lanceolate, irregularly 1–2-lobed; callus short, hairs 0.5 mm appressed; anthers 2–3.3 mm. **Perfect floret:** lemma 4–5 mm, broadly ovate, glabrous, appressed shortly hairy at apex with slender subapical mucro 0–1 mm; palea approximately equal to lemma, ovate-oblong, 1-keel, hairy above; lodicules 0.6–1 mm, glabrous. **Anthers** 1.3–2.0 mm. Ovary c. 1 mm, stigma-styles 4.5–6.5 mm; seed c.2 mm.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to the grasses of New Zealand

## FLOWERING

October–January

## FRUITING

November–March

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Not well known from cultivation. Plants from Campbell Island grown in Auckland (hardly any surprises here!) disliked the heat and humidity and soon died.

## THREATS

A local endemic, common within its preferred habitat and geographic range.

## ETYMOLOGY

**hierochloe:** From the Greek hieros ‘sacred’ and chloa ‘grass’ meaning holy grass. European species of this grass were once strewn on church floors.

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson AT, Smith HA. 1986. Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hierochloe-brunonis/>