Holcus lanatus

COMMON NAMES
Yorkshire fog

BIOSTATUS
Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not applicable

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Grasses

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Tufted pale, greyish green, furry grass, velvety to the touch, up to c. 1 m tall, with a soft whitish, pale green, pinkish or purple flower head.

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Purple, Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Tufted, sometimes stoloniferous, softly hairy, greyish green, perennial, 35–110 cm. **Leaf-sheath** firmly membranous, striate, ± keeled above near ligule, villous with long, fine, silky hairs, basal sheaths often purplish. **Ligule** (0.6)–1–3 mm, ± truncate, denticulate, apex finely ciliate and occasionally with a few long hairs, abaxially villous. **Leaf-blade** (2.5)–4.5–15–(20) cm × (1.5)–3–10 mm, pubescent and with longer soft hairs, narrowed to acuminate tip; margins finely ciliate, and with longer hairs. **Culm** erect, or ascending from geniculate base, nodes and internodes pubescent. **Panicle** 4–18 × 1.5–7 cm, lanceolate, ovoid or sometimes oblong, dense to lax, erect or nodding; rachis and branches pubescent. **Spikelets** 3.8–5.5 mm, whitish, pale green, or purplish. **Glumes** stiff-ciliate on keels and lateral nerves of upper glume, elsewhere minutely scabrid to shortly pubescent; lower sometimes slightly shorter, narrow-lanceolate, acute to mucronate, upper broader, elliptic, mucronate, or awned to 0.8 mm. **Lemma** 2–2.7 mm, elliptic-lanceolate, glabrous, shining, keel sparsely finely prickle-toothed, apex minutely ciliate-scabrid; lower lemma awnless, upper lemma narrower, awn stout, 1.4–2.8 mm, inserted c. 0.4 mm below tip of lemma, becoming recurved and uncinate. **Palea keel** sparsely short-ciliate above, apex obtusely lobed, minutely ciliate. **Callus hairs** few, to 1 mm. **Rachilla** glabrous. **Anthers** 1–2.2 mm. **Caryopsis** 1–1.5 × 0.4–0.5 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA
Another *Holcus* species, *H. mollis*, found in eastern and south western South island, is similar but forms loose swards, not dense tufts, has very hairy nodes and brown, rather than purple, veins on the sheath.

DISTRIBUTION
Common throughout New Zealand.

HABITAT
A wide range of disturbed wet and dry sites, often in fens.

GENUS
Holcus



Coromandel. October. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Holcus lanatus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Holcus lanatus L.

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
Spring to early summer

FRUITING
Summer to autumn

YEAR NATURALISED
1844

ORIGIN
Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION
Pasture plant or seed contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES
Rarely controlled, but can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Perennial. Seed dispersed by animals, water or contaminated machinery.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FAC: Facultative
Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
holcus: From the Greek holkus, an old Greek name for grass.

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)
This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report here.

NVS CODE
HOLLAN

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
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Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication. https://docs.niwa.co.nz/library/public/FreInSpec.pdf
Lambrechtsen NC. 1986. What grass is that? A guide to identification of some introduced grasses in New Zealand by vegetative characters. *New Zealand DSIR Information Series no. 87*.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Edgar and Connor, (2000).

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/holcus-lanatus/

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