

Holcus lanatus

COMMON NAME

Yorkshire fog

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Holcus lanatus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

HOLLAN

BRIEF 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.

DISTRIBUTION

Common throughout New Zealand.

HABITAT

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

FEATURES

Tufted, sometimes stoloniferous, softly hairy, greyish green perennials, 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 prickly-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 uncinat. Palea keels 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, very hairy nodes and brown, rather than purple, veins on the sheath.

FLOWERING

Spring to early summer



Coromandel. October. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Holcus lanatus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Purple, Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Seed dispersed by animals, water or contaminated machinery.

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.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A (1986). Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd: Buckenhill, UK.

Edgar E. and H. Connor. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Volume 5. Manaaki Whenua Press: Lincoln, New Zealand.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

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<http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-fact-sheets/freshwater-pest-species>

Lambrechtsen, N.C. (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

MORE INFORMATION

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