

Isolepis aucklandica

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Widely creeping, bright green, leafy, rhizomatous sedge forming large, turf-like patches. **Rhizome** c. 0.5 mm diameter. **Culms** 10.0–80.0 × c. 0.5 mm, bright green above, red-brown towards the base, rigid. **Leaves** up to 6 per culm, usually > culms, c. 0.5 mm wide, or often setaceous and filiform, coriaceous, curved; sheaths with truncate orifice, pale brown and membranous, often streaked with red, rarely entirely dark red-purple. **Inflorescence** apparently lateral, of 1–2 narrow-oblong spikelets, 1.0–4.0 × 0.5–2 mm, partly hidden by the enlarged base of a subtending bract up to 5 times length of spikelet. **Glumes** 1.5–2.5 mm long, lanceolate, acute, caducous, green to pale grey-brown with reddish marks or deep red-purple, margins tapered and often pinched in at the tip below the green, thickened, ± excurrent keel. **Hypogynous bristles** 0. **Stamens** 3. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** 1–2 mm long, slightly > 0.5 mm wide, almost = glume, elliptical, ± trigonous with rounded angles, almost white to yellowish, or grey- to red-brown, smooth and shining but very finely reticulate, tapering towards the apiculate black tip.

SIMILAR TAXA

Isolepis aucklandica is easily distinguished by its bright green colour; leaves mostly > culms; 3 stamens per glume (rarely 1–2 in upper portion of spikelet); by the glume-margins and nut tapering toward the tip; and by the cream nut.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell, Macquarie Islands. Also in Australia.

HABITAT

Coastal to alpine (up to 1300 m a.s.l.). Mostly montane in the northern part of its range. A species of boggy ground in forest as well as wetlands, often growing on peaty turf on forest margins or on permanently damp rock shelves or seepages in forest.

GENUS

Isolepis

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Isolepis aucklandica Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Isolepis subcucullata Bergg.; *Isolepis cartilaginea* var. *rigida* Bergg.; *Scirpus aucklandicus* (Hook.f.) Boeck; *S. aucklandicus* var. *subcucullata* (Bergg.) C.B. Clarke; *Scirpus muscosus* Kirk;



Mt Holdsworth, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mount Ruapehu. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 09/02/2012, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Nuts are dispersed by water and possibly granivory and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. Requires a permanently moist, acidic soil to flourish. Best grown in partial to full shade.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

isolepis: From the Greek isos (equal) and lepis (scale)

aucklandica: Of the Auckland Islands

NVS CODE

ISOAUC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened [Help](#)

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. *Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae*. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/isolepis-aucklandica/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026