

# Isolepis cernua var. cernua

## COMMON NAME

slender clubrush

## SYNONYMS

*Isolepis pygmaea* (Vahl) Kunth; *Scirpus cernuus* Vahl; *Fimbristylis pygmaeum* Vahl

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Isolepis cernua* (Vahl) Roem. & Schult. var. *cernua*

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

ISOCVC

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand. Almost cosmopolitan but apparently absent from S.E. Asia.

## HABITAT

Mostly coastal on damp sand, or peat within sand flats, dune slacks, fringing lagoons and slow flowing brackish water, on coastal rocks and boulder beaches. More rarely inland around lake margins, and in peat bogs (especially restiad bogs)



Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



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## FEATURES

Variable in size, in dense tufts or with a shortly branched ascending rhizome. Culms 20-200 mm long, usually c. 0.5 mm. diameter or less, but occasionally up to 1 mm diameter. Leaves 1-4 or 0, ± = culms, or much < culms, c. 0.5 mm wide, or often reduced to shortly mucronate sheaths; sheaths dark red-purple at the base, lighter brown towards the truncate orifice. Inflorescence of 1-(2-3) spikelets; subtending bract ± = or usually slightly > spikelets, 3-25 mm long, setaceous or leaf-like, caducous. Spikelets 2.0-5.0 × 1.0-2.5 mm, elliptical, obtuse, almost white, or green, or with red-brown markings. Glumes 1-2 mm. long, broadly ovate, only slightly concave with keel not prominent, obtuse, green to very pale straw coloured, or with red-brown markings at the sides, margins entire, membranous, rounded towards the tip, or with the keel at tip of glume somewhat thickened and ± excurrent, lateral nerves conspicuous. Hypogynous bristles 0. Stamens 3, rarely 2 or 1 in occasional glumes. Style-branches 3. Nut us. slightly < 1 mm. long, but occasionally slightly > 1 mm., c.0.5 mm. wide, obovoid or occasionally elliptical-obovoid, plano-convex, or subtrigonus and obtusely angled at the back, rounded at the tip and sharply apiculate, red-brown or dark grey at maturity, minutely but very distinctly reticulate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

An extremely variable species, *I. cernua* is generally easily recognised by its preference for coastal habitats (but it can occur well inland as well); leaves usually < culms; stamens mostly 3 per glume, trigonus red-brown or dark brown nut; and by the glume margins and nut with are rounded toward the apex.

## FLOWERING

August - December (may be present throughout the year)

## FRUITING

October - May (may be present throughout the year)

## LIFE CYCLE

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 whole plants. Once established rather tolerant of a range of conditions but flourishes best in full sun in a permanently damp soil. An attractive pot plant.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**cernua:** Drooping

## ATTRIBUTION

Description from Moore and Edgar (1970).

## 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.

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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