

Isolepis habra

SYNONYMS

Scirpus habrus Edgar; *Isolepis limbata* W.M.Curtis,

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Isolepis habra (Edgar) Soják

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

ISOHAB

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura and Chatham Islands. Also Australia.

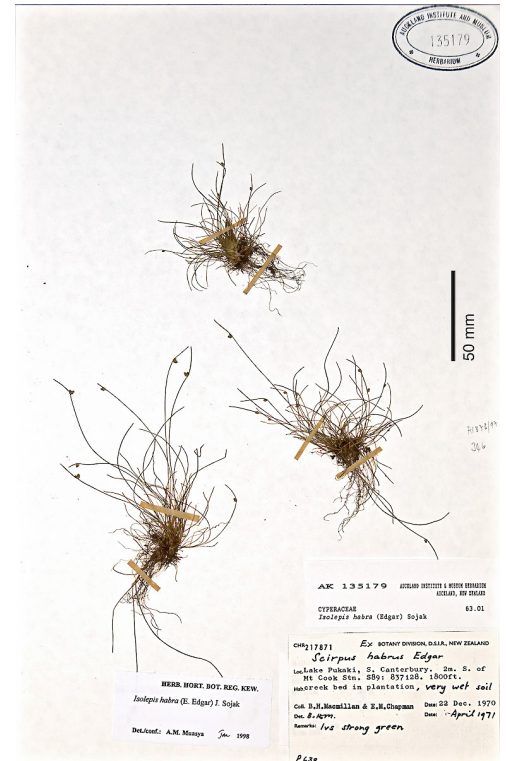
HABITAT

In the northern part of its range strictly montane, usually in cloud forest on permanently damp peaty ground. Extending to sea level in southern part of range, where it may grow in open coastal turf, peat bogs and in damp sites under coastal scrub and forest.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Herbarium specimen: AK 135179. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender perennial, in close-packed tufts from a shortly creeping rhizome.

Culms 50–300 mm long, less than 0.5 mm in diameter, soft and usually flaccid; basal bracts light reddish brown. **Leaves** 1–3–(4) per culm, bright green, soft, usually flaccid, shorter than the culms; sheaths often tinged with red-purple. **Inflorescence** of 1–3 ovate spikelets, occasionally proliferous, subtending bract up to 6 times the length of spikelet.

Spikelets 2–4–5 × 2–3 mm, varying in colour from pale green, through green tinged with red-purple to almost entirely black. **Glumes** (1.0)–1.2–1.8 mm long, ovate-elliptical, acute, keel green, prominent, often slightly excurrent, sides wholly cream, or with red-purple markings to almost entirely dark red-purple, but then often with pale cream nerves.

Stamens 1–2–(3), usually distributed as 2 in lower glumes, usually only 1 stamen in upper glumes. **Style branches** 3. **Hypogynous bristles** 0. **Nut** 1.0–1.4 × 0.6–0.8 mm, obovate-elliptical, trigonous with angles slightly thickened, cream to sometimes light brown, minutely stipitate and apiculate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by the usually flaccid growth habit, culms which are usually < 0.5 mm diameter and > 60 mm long, stamens mostly 2 per lower glumes and 1 per upper, and by ribbed nut < 1 mm long. Spikelet colour varies in the northern two-thirds of New Zealand these are uniformly light green or reddish black but in the southern South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura and Chatham Islands especially they are mostly dark black with cream nervation.

FLOWERING

Throughout the year but peaking in October–December

FRUITING

Throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces, by seed or from the division of established plants. An attractive plant for a shady, damp site or planted in shallow water around a pond. The Chatham Islands form which has darker black spikelets is especially attractive.

ETYMOLOGY

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

habra: Soft, delicate

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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.

MORE INFORMATION

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