

Isolepis inundata

SYNONYMS

Scirpus inundatus (R.Br.) Spreng.; *Scirpus inundatus* var. *major* Cheeseman; *Isolepis propinqua* R.Br.; *Scirpus cartilagineus* var. *propinqua* (Nees) Benth.; *Isolepis conspersa* Nees in Endl.; *Scirpus conspersus* (Nees) Boeck.; *Isolepis gunnii* Steud.; *Isolepis urvillei* Steud.; *Scirpus urvillei* (Steud.) Boeck.; *Isolepis multinervosa* Boeck.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Isolepis inundata R.Br.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

ISOINU

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South and Chatham Islands. Also Australia, Malaysia, South America and Norfolk Island

HABITAT

Coastal to montane in fresh water wetlands (eutrophic to oligotrophic). Often forming a floating sūd around lake, pond and stream margins. Sometimes colonising old water troughs and damp pasture.

FEATURES

Initially tufted, with culms soon arching and spreading. Culms 60.0–500.0 × 0.4–1.8 mm, tufted, numerous, erect, often rather rigid (especially in lower third), terete, bright green. Leaves 1, or rarely 2–3 at the base of the culm, < 1 mm. wide; frequently reduced to a single, mucronate, red basal bract, mucro usually short. Inflorescence an apparently lateral, solitary head of (1–)3–6(–10) crowded spikelets, often proliferous with 1–3 slender branchlets each terminated by a smaller head of spikelets, subtending bract usually slightly > spikelets. Spikelets 2.0–5.0 × 1.5–3.0 mm, ovate or oblong-ovate, often dark red-purple. Glumes 1.5–2.0 mm. long, oblong-obovate, obtuse or ± acute, with a large dark red to black patch on either side of the pale green keel, with numerous distinct, light brown nerves, margins entire, white and membranous, flattened at the tip beside the keel. Hypogynous bristles 0. Stamen 1, very rarely 2. Style-branches 3, or rarely 2–3. Nut c.1.0 × 0.5 mm, slightly > ½ length of glume, conspicuously trigonous (very occasionally biconvex), distinctly mucronate, pale straw-coloured, almost white, occasionally grey-brown, surface distinctly reticulate.



Isolepis inundata. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Isolepis inundata. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

SIMILAR TAXA

Close to *I. distigmatosa* (C.B. Clarke) Edgar and *I. prolifer* (Rottb.) R.Br. in often having no true leaves but only sheathing bracts. It is distinguished from these species by its usually pale green basally blotched dark red or purple glumes, mostly 3 rather than 2 style-branches, and trigonous (rarely biconvex) nuts. It is usually a much finer plant than either of these species.

FLOWERING

September - January

FRUITING

October - June

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 but can become invasive in some situations.

ETYMOLOGY

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

inundata: Growing in places that are periodically flooded

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted 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-inundata/>