

# Isolepis praetextata

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted perennial, often prostrate or drooping, from a slender ascending rhizome c. 0.5 mm in diameter. **Culms** 30–300 × 0.5–1.0 mm; 1–2 basal bracts per culm, membranous, grey-brown or sometimes red-purple.

**Leaves** (1)–2–3–(4) per culm, shorter than or equaling culms; sheath often streaked with red-purple. **Inflorescence** c. (3)–4–5 mm high and (3)–5–9 mm broad, usually almost semicircular in outline, of 2–5 ovate, obtuse, close packed spikelets, each usually dark red-purple, almost black below and green above to grey-brown later, rarely entirely grey-green; subtending bract much exceeding inflorescence, up to 10 cm long, rigid, as wide as a foliage leaf, red-purple at base, sometimes a second shorter subtending bract is present. **Glumes** 2.0–2.5 mm long, lanceolate, acute, membranous, tinged with red-purple, keel very thick, green, slightly excurrent. **Stamens** 3 in lower glumes, to 2–1 above. **Style branches** 3. **Hypogynous bristles** 0. **Nut** about half the length of the glume, c. 1.0 × 0.5 mm, trigonous, with angles slightly thickened, elliptical, smooth, pale cream, shortly stipitate and apiculate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to large, leafy forms of *Isolepis inundata* R.Br. but differing by the distinctly more leafy habit, much longer bract subtending the inflorescence; usually (1)–2 rather than 1–(2) stamens per glume, and by the glumes lanceolate, acute and strongly keeled, rather than ovate, obtuse and less prominently keeled.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (south Wellington coastline), South Island (Westland, Fiordland, Southland), Stewart Island/Rakiura, Snares Island, Campbell Islands, Auckland Islands and Chatham Islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal banks, boulder falls and turf or in seepages. Sometimes on damp ground ground under coastal scrub and forest.

## GENUS

Isolepis

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Isolepis praetextata* (Edgar) Soják

## SYNONYMS

*Scirpus praetextatus* Edgar



Herbarium specimen: AK 227041.  
Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Herbarium specimen: AK 227041.  
Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

October–January

## FRUITING

December–April

## 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

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**praetextata**: Bordered with purple

## NVS CODE

ISOPRA

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CI, DPR, DPS, DPT, NS, RR, Sp 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)

Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

## MORE INFORMATION

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

**PDF DATE**

08 June 2026