

Isolepis reticularis

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)


CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rather delicate, finely tufted, drooping plants, loosely carpeting the ground with lax, filiform, light green culms. **Culms** 40–300 mm long, < 0.5 mm diameter, smooth, compressed. **Leaves** 1–3, similar to culms but usually much shorter, lower most leaf reduced to a sheath 10–15 mm long, red towards the base, often with a fine green mucro c. 0.3–0.5 mm. long. **Inflorescence** apparently lateral, of 1–3–(5) spikelets, often proliferous; bract subtending inflorescence usually much > spikelets, often filiform. **Spikelets** 2.0–5.0–(7.0) × 1.0–1.5–(1.7) mm, oblong-ovate, usually pale green tinged with red. **Glumes** 1 to slightly < 2 mm. long, ovate-lanceolate, acute, pale straw-coloured, rather transparent, or sprinkled with dark red dots, or red-striped or almost black, margins entire, pinched in at the tip below the green, slightly excurrent keel, lateral nerves conspicuous. **Hypogynous bristles** 0. **Stamens** 1. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** c. 1.0 × 0.5 mm., from  length of glume to c. = glume, elliptical or obovoid, trigonous, pale straw-coloured, almost white, glossy, markedly apiculate, tip not dark.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the flaccid growth habit, extremely fine (< 0.5 mm diameter) bright green culms, greenish spikelets, stamens 1–2 per glume (rarely 3 in the lower portion of spikelet), acute glumes 1–2 mm long, with the tip constricted beside the keel, and cream or white nut. The spikelets in this species are often proliferous.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (rarely subalpine). Favouring riparian habitats in lowland forest but also colonising coastal seepages, or seepages within forest, lake and pond margins and occasionally the lagg zone of peat bogs. A common inhabitant of willow carr.

GENUS

Isolepis

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Isolepis reticularis Colenso



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/04/2010, Licence: CC BY.



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SYNONYMS

Scirpus reticularis (Colenso) Edgar; *Scirpus inundatus* var. *gracillimus* Cheeseman; *Isolepis inundatus* var. *gracillima* (Cheeseman) W.R.B.Oliv.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–December

FRUITING

October–March

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 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.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

ETYMOLOGY

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

reticularis: In a net-like pattern

NVS CODE

ISORET

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, 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).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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