Juncus edgariae

COMMON NAME
wiwi, Edgar's rush

SYNONYMS
Juncus gregiflorus L.A.S.Johnson (now an Australian endemic)

FAMILY
Juncaceae

AUTHORITY
Juncus edgariae L.A.S.Johnson et K.L.Wilson

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE
JUNEDG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Kermadec, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Naturalised in Britain

HABITAT
Easily the most common indigenous species. Coastal to alpine (1600 m a.s.l.) but mainly coastal to montane. Usually in open shrubland, fringing wetlands, and in seasonally damp sites. Often found invading pasture and in urban areas.

Juncus edgariae. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

Close up of Juncus edgariae. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FEATURES
Bright to dark green, orange-green to red-green (drying glossy yellow-green) rather variable perennial forming compact to diffuse tussocks 0.6-2.5 m tall. Rhizome at or just below ground, 5 mm diameter, horizontal, difficult to pull from the soil. Flowering culms 1-3 mm diameter, erect, rather wiry (very hard when dry), smooth, shining; striations 22-60; internal culm pith interrupted irregularly or occasionally continuous; leaves absent; basal bracts dark red-brown below, straw-coloured above, tightly sheathing the stem or the upper-most loosely sheathing. Inflorescence apparently lateral, variable, either many or few-flowered, open with few to many branches bearing flowers in small clusters at the tips of branchlets, or condensed to a compact, central cluster with a few pedunculate side clusters, or a single spherical compact head wider than 10 mm. Flowers 1.5-2.0 mm long; tepals 6, brownish green, later becoming brown, acute to acuminate or mucronate; outer tepals 1.7-2.6 mm long, with fine hyaline margins, inner tepals slightly shorter with broad hyaline margins. Stamens 3, shorter than tepals; anthers 0.4-0.6 mm long < or equal in legnth to filaments. Capsule 1.5-2.3 mm long, equal to or < tepals, ellipsoid, obovoid, dark golden brown, with a dark brown, obtuse, almost retuse, apiculate tip. Seeds 0.4-0.6 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA
Distinguished from the other indigenous species with the flowers usually clustered at the branchlet apices, by the capsules 1.5-2.3 mm long. Moore & Edgar (1970) describe the stems of this species as bright green but in practice it is more usually dark green, orange-green or red-green, usually drying glossy yellow-green. Within the Central Volcanic Plateau of the North Island plants ascribed to this species often have extremely condensed, compact inflorescences. Of those species naturalised to New Zealand, J. edgariae is perhaps most similar to J. continuus L.A.S.Johnson, still a relatively uncommon species of mainly Northland habitats, and from which it differs by the usually interrupted (rarely continuous) bright white, dense stem pith and capsules < or more or less equal in length to the tepals. Long confused with Juncus gregiflorus L.A.S.Johnson which is now regarded as endemic to Australia (Johnson & Wilson 2000).

FLOWERING
October - December

FRUITING
November - April

LIFE CYCLE
Mucilaginous seeds are dispersed by attachment, wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from fresh seed and by the division of whole plants. Can be invasive.

ETYMOLOGY
juncus: From the Latin jungere ‘to tie or bind’, the stems of some species being used to make cord (Johnson and Smith)

WHERE TO BUY
Occasionally available from retail plant and specialist native plant nurseries

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE
Plants referred to this species from the Central Volcanic Plateau and adjacent mountain ranges of the North Island have a densely clustered inflorescence, quite distinct from lowland forms and this is retained in cultivation. They may warrant taxonomic recognition.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 September 2006). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970) (as J. gregiflorus) supplemented by notes taken from Johnson & Wilson (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, L.A.S.; Wilson, K.L. 2000: *Juncus edgariae* (Juncaceae) - a new species from New Zealand. *Telopea 9*: 399-402,

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, Wellington, Government Printer.

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Juncus edgariae Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/juncus-edgariae/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/juncus-edgariae/