

Juncus effusus var. effusus

COMMON NAMES

soft rush

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Upright clump-forming leafless rush to 1.2 tall, with tall, soft*, cylindrical stems, with continuous pith. The open clustered flowerheads near the end of each stem are made up of many light brown flowers/capsules (fruit). *Stems squash much more easily between thumb and fingers than most other 'leafless' rushes.

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dense tuft-forming rush with short rhizomes. **Stems** 30–120 cm × 1.5–3 mm, cylindrical, bright or yellow-green, softer than most similar spp, easily split or compressed, smooth, shining; with continuous, cobwebby pith. **True leaves** absent. **Basal sheaths** reddish-brown, closely held to stem. **Seed head** not at end of stem, with many tiny green flowers along short, downward-curving branchlets. **Seed capsule** 2–3 mm long, oval, light brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to other tall leafless rushes, but has an open inflorescence with the lower branches decumbent and cobwebby continuous pith in the stem. The soft, easily compressed and broken stems are distinct.

DISTRIBUTION

Widespread and common throughout.

HABITAT

Wet pasture and a wide range of wet habitats, including peaty areas.

GENUS

Juncus

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus effusus L. var. effusus

SYNONYMS

Agathryon effusum (L.) Záveská Drábková & Pročková



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/01/2017, Licence: CC BY.



Longitudinal section of leaf showing pith. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/01/2017, Licence: CC BY.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Subgenus *Agathyron*, Section *Juncotypus* (Genuini) Kirschner (2002: Juncaceae 3). Proćków et al. (2023) proposed a taxonomic segregation of *Juncus* into six genera based on molecular and morphological evidence. Whilst it has long been recognised that the current circumscription of *Juncus* includes morphologically divergent taxa—reflected in the recognition of numerous subgenera and sections—the consensus view of the NZPCN website taxonomy subcommittee, taking into consideration advice from Australian *Juncus* expert Dr Karen Wilson (NSW Herbarium) and others in Europe is that the generic segregations proposed need further consideration and testing. Accordingly, it has been decided to maintain the current broad circumscription of *Juncus*, but to include all new names as synonyms in factsheets. We thank, in particular, Dr Wilson for her helpful comments.

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Spring to early summer

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

YEAR NATURALISED

1864

ORIGIN

Europe, Asia and Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Rarely controlled, but can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation, susceptible to grazing.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seed dispersed by animals, water or contaminated machinery.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

ETYMOLOGY

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

NVS CODE

JUNEVE

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication.

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Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319 p.

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Kirschner, J. (compiler) (2002). Juncaceae 3: *Juncus* subg. *Agathryon*, Species Plantarum: Flora of the World Part 8: 1–192.

Proćków, J., Závěská Drábková, L. 2023. A revision of the Juncaceae with delimitation of six new genera: nomenclatural changes in *Juncus*. *Phytotaxa* 622(1): 17–41.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Healy and Edgar (1980).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/juncus-effusus-var-effusus/>

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