Juncus kraussii subsp. australiensis

COMMON NAME
Sea rush

SYNONYMS
Juncus maritimus var. australiensis Buchenau

FAMILY
Juncaceae

AUTHORITY
Juncus kraussii subsp. australiensis (Buchenau) Snogerup

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Rushes and Allied Plants

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. North, South and Chatham Islands. From Te Paki to the Okarito in the west and Dunedin in the South. Inland in the North Island at Lake Rotorua, at Orakeikorako, and in the South Island at Mesopotamia, Rangitata River

HABITAT
Primarily coastal where it is found in salt marshes, brackish stream, lagoon and river margins, estuaries. Also inland around geothermal vents at Lake Rotorua and Orakeikorako, and inland at the headwaters of the Rangitata River.

FEATURES
Dense to loosely tufted, dark brown to brownish-black, perennial herb. Rhizome 5-8 mm diameter, horizontal sparingly branched. Flowering stems 0.3-1.2 m tall, 1.5-3.0 mm diameter, rather distant along rhizome, rigid, terete, light to dark yellow-brown, dark brown or brownish-black; internal pith continuous; basal bracts stiff, acute, red-brown, upper ones obviously larger, broader and mucronate. Leaves 1-2, terete, bright green, sheathing at base, similar to the stems but shorter. Inflorescence apparently lateral, open, irregularly-branched, branchlets numerous, rigid, almost equaling the pungent sheathing bract. Flowers 3 mm long, clustered at the branchlet apices; tepals rigidly stiff, red-brown, midrib green to light brown. Stamens 3 perfect, 3 aborted, rarely with 1 or more of the usually aborted inner ring functional; anthers twice as long as filaments. Capsule slightly > tepals, dark brown to almost black, ovoid, shining, mucronate.
**SIMILAR TAXA**
Most likely to be found growing with Juncus acutus L., an aggressive, introduced species with sharp-tipped bracts above the flower heads; J. kraussii differs in having open rather than densely compact inflorescence; flowers in small rather than large, compact clusters; and dark brown rather than red-brown capsules which are more or less equal to, rather than > in length to the tepals.

**FLOWERING**
September - December

**FLOWER COLOURS**
Brown, Red/Pink

**FRUITING**
November - April

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

**PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE**
Easily grown from fresh seed and division of whole plants. An attractive species ideal in rock gardens and one that should be used more widely in coastal plantings, especially bordering saltmarshes.

**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**
Not commercially available

**ATTRIBUTION**

**REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

**CITATION**
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**MORE INFORMATION**