

Juncus sarophorus

COMMON NAME

broom rush, fan-flowered rush

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1963)

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus sarophorus L.A.S.Johnson

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE

JUNSAR

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South, Stewart, Chatham and Campbell Islands. Also in Australia

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland in damp, open ground. Often in pasture or on the margins of coastal wetlands, and along river flats. Sometimes a troublesome weed.



Coromandel, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Inflorescence. In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

Densely tufted, tussock-forming, dull blue-green perennial herb. Stems tightly clumped and erect near base, usually drooping in upper half to one third. Rhizome stout, 5-10 mm diameter, horizontal. Flowering stems 1-2 m tall, 2-3 mm diameter, numerous, pliant though wiry, basally very hard, ridged, not shining; internal pith cobwebby, irregularly interrupted, rarely continuous. Leaves absent, Basal bracts basally black, otherwise dark red-purple, closely sheathing the stem, the uppermost bract usually straw-coloured and up to 250 mm long. Inflorescence lateral, many-flowered, very pale brown or cream, massed together as a dense fan-shaped head of flowers; flowers closely spaced along the numerous, stiffly erect to spreading branchlets which are pressed up hard against the very long subtending floral bract; bract overtopping flower, sometimes up to 300 mm long; flowers 2 mm long, tepals white and membranous, centrally striped green, later straw-coloured and more rigid. Stamens 3(-6). Capsule from slightly > 1.5 mm to slightly > 2 mm long, equal to or slightly > tepals, narrow, ovate-oblong, obtuse, very pale brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished by the combination of the dense, tussock forming habit, blue-green, wiry, drooping stems, and compact, many-flowered, fan-shaped inflorescences. Most similar to *J. inflexus* L. which is a naturalised species differing from *J. sarophorus* by the diffuse rather than dense fan-shaped inflorescence; by the inflorescence not firmly appressed to the subtending bract; and dark purple-brown rather than light-brown capsules 2.5-3.5 rather than 1.5-2.0 mm long.

FLOWERING

September - January

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

October - May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Can be invasive, and one of the few indigenous species that can be a pasture weed

ETYMOLOGY

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

sarophorus: (As in *Juncus sarophorus*) meaning 'broom bearing', from Greek *saron* brush, broom (from *sairein* to sweep); -phorus = bearing, carrying

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 September 2006). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

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

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MORE INFORMATION

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