Machaerina arthrophylla

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dark green, rhizomatous sedge. **Rhizome** c. 3 mm diameter, horizontal, shortly creeping, hard, lignaceous, covered with very loose bracts. **Culms** 0.5–1.3 m tall, 1–2 mm diameter, terete. **Leaves**: lowermost reduced to sheathing bracts, light brown; upper leaves 1–3, terete like the stems, internally septate, tips acute. **Inflorescence** a panicle, 100–400 mm long, rounded at the tip, interrupted, branchlets drooping, in distant fascicles, the lowermost often remote, the stoutest lateral branchlet arising from lowest spathaceous bract < 1 mm diameter, usually only c. 0.5 mm diameter; bracts large, membranous, acuminate, spathaceous, light greenish brown. **Spikelets**, 3.0–4.5 mm long, approximate and rather evenly distributed along the branchlets, brown, 2–4-flowered, usually only 2 lowest flowers fertile. **Glumes** 4–7, ovate, acute, or acuminate, membranous, pale brown below, red towards the apex and scabrid; margins ciliate. **Nut** 2.0–2.5 × c. 1 mm, oblong, trigonous, smooth, whitish, beak small.

SIMILAR TAXA
Machaerina arthrophylla is recognised by the terete, dark green, internally septate leaves; red-brown inflorescences which are rounded at the apices, and whose branches are arranged in distant fascicles (and whose stoutest lateral branchlet of inflorescence arises from the lower most spathaceous bract.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: North (Waikato south to Waiouru), South (D'urville Island, Westland, Southland), and Chatham Island. Also in Australia.

HABITAT
Coastal to subalpine (up to 1200 m a.s.l.) in freshwater wetlands, especially on the margins of lakes, tarns and slow-flowing streams; also within burn pools in restiad bogs, and in low moor, acidic wetlands.

GENUS
Machaerina

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY
Machaerina arthrophylla (Nees) Koyama

SYNONYMS
Baumea huttonii (Kirk) Blake; Baumea arthrophylla (Nees) Boeck.

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–December

FRUITING
December–May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Nuts are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult. Can be grown from fresh seed but slow to establish. Resents root disturbance.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
OBL: Obligate Wetland
Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

NVS CODE
MACART

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR, SO 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.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.
Wilcox M. 2002. *Baumea arthrophylla* at Mahurangi. *Auckland Botanical Society 57*: 51.
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.



Baumea arthrophylla. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (8 September 2006).
Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970).
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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/machaerina-arthrophylla/

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