

Pentapogon crinitus

COMMON NAMES

long-hair plume grass

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: EF, SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Light green to yellow-green, stout, tall tufted grass. **Branching** extravaginal. **Leaves** \leq to the erect to somewhat nodding narrow plumed culms. **Leaf-sheath** light brown, with minute, soft, appressed, retrorse hairs. **Ligule** 0.5–1.5 mm, membranous, undersides minutely scabrid, more or less truncate, minutely ciliate, occasionally asymmetric. **Leaf-blade** up to 400 × 1.5–5.0 mm, stiff, flat or slightly inrolled, gradually tapering, strongly ribbed, underside scabrid near apex, upper surface minutely scabrid on margins and ribs. **Culm** 0.3–1.2 m, internodes glabrous or minutely scaberulous below panicle. **Panicle** 100–250 mm, erect, spicate, light green to straw-yellow, often tinged with purple, densely branched, close-set, erect branches hidden by spikelets pulled together by entwining awns; rachis, branchlets and pedicels closely short-scabrid; spikelets, numerous, glossy. **Glumes** very narrow, linear-lanceolate, silvery; lower 4.5–9.0 mm, more or less equal to glume, shortly aristate, upper 5.5–10.0 mm long, equal to or greater than lemma, apex acuminate. **Lemma** 4.5–8.0 mm long, minutely scabrid, apex scarcely bifid; awn 20–30 mm, light green to purple, inserted 1.5–3.0 mm below lemma apex, column straight, awn more or less falcate and twisted about once. **Palea** 3–5 mm long, very narrow, keels minutely scabrid near ciliate apex. **Callus hairs** to 0.7 mm. **Rachilla** prolongation 0.1 mm long. **Lodicules** 0.5–0.7 mm long, membranous, elliptic, acute, apically ciliate. **Anthers** 1–3, 0.7–2.0 mm in opened flowers, 0.2–0.9 mm long in cleistogamous flowers. **Seed** 2.0–2.5 × 0.3–0.4 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to the naturally uncommon, range restricted *Pentapogon lautumia* from which it differs by the callus hairs, which are less than 1 mm long (\geq 3 mm long in *P. lautumia*), awns 20–30 mm rather than 8–12 mm long, and by the straight rather than twisted column.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Throughout North, South, Stewart, Chatham and Kermadec Islands. Also in Australia and most of the Pacific Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine. Usually in open ground under light scrub, under light forest cover, in tussock grassland, on clay pans and along roadsides. Also frequently encountered on rock outcrops, in associated talus, on boulderfield and as an urban weed of rough pasture, kerbsides and industrial wasteland.



Kuaotunu, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Rangitoto Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

GENUS

Pentapogon

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Pentapogon crinitus (L. f.) P.M. Peterson, Romasch. et Soreng

SYNONYMS

Anthoxanthum crinitum L.f., Dichelachne forsteriana Trin. et Rupr., Deyeuxia crinita (L.f.) Zotov, Dichelachne crinita (L.f.) Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–February

FRUITING

October–July

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Florets are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Easily established and can become invasive. The stiffly erect, dense whitist-yellow plume like flower heads can be rather attractive if grown in mass.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

PENCRI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 70

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025”](#) Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.
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.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000)

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pentapogon-crinitus/>

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