

# Poa chathamica

## COMMON NAME

Chatham Islands poa

## SYNONYMS

*Poa anceps* var. *chathamica* (Petrie) Zotov

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Poa chathamica* Petrie

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

POACHA

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 112$

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Chatham Islands (all main islands).

## HABITAT

Coastal and inland. Widespread on sand dunes, within restiad peat bogs, rough pasture, along stream banks, river gorges, on rock outcrops and cliff faces and in boulder falls.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



*Poa chathamica*. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



*Poa chathamica*. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Light green, dark green to blue-green, widely creeping drooping perennial grass usually forming dense, leafy swards from long, narrow rhizomes, or stiffly erect tufts to 1 m. **Leaves** about equal to culms; branching extravaginal near plant base, intravaginal above; leaf-blades long persistent. **Leaf-sheath** light green to light brown or straw-coloured, coriaceous, distinctly ribbed, smooth to finely scabrid, keeled. **Ligule** 0.2–1.0 mm, truncate, stiff, rim ciliate, undersides with matted stiff minute hairs. **Leaf-blade** 50–600 × 2.5–4.5 mm, folded to flat, or inrolled and c. 1 mm diameter, coriaceous, underside smooth, upper surface ribbed, covered with short prickly-teeth and sometimes short stiff hairs; margins ± thickened, smooth to sparsely scabrid, midrib scabrid near straight-sided, pungent tip. **Culm** 100–900 mm, internodes smooth, densely scabrid below panicle. **Panicle** 55–120 mm, lax or contracted; branches spreading or erect, sparsely to densely scabrid. **Spikelets** 6.5–14.5 mm, 2–5-flowered, greyish green to light greenish brown. **Glumes** subequal, 3-nerved, elliptic-lanceolate, acute to acuminate, often with minute fine hairs near tip, occasionally scabrid throughout, midnerve ciliate-scabrid especially on upper ½; lower 4.5–7.5 mm, upper 4.5–8.0 mm; margins ciliate. **Lemma** 4.5–9.0 mm, 5-nerved, elliptic- to oblong-lanceolate, subobtuse to subacute, scabrid above or occasionally throughout, midnerve with long fine hairs to ½ length, lateral nerves hairy near base; margins minutely ciliate. **Palea** 3.5–7.5 mm, keels rather stiffly ciliate-scabrid, interkeel with sparse minute hairs. **Callus** with loose web of long fine crinkled hairs. **Rachilla** 0.5–1.0 mm, glabrous to sparsely minutely pubescent; prolongation twice as long. **Lodicules** 0.5–2.0 mm, occasionally hair-tipped. **Anthers** 2.0–3.5 mm. **Seed** 2.0 × 0.5 mm

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to the grasses of New Zealand

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Poa chathamica* appears to be related to *P. anceps*, *P. xenica* Edgar et Connor, and an as yet unnamed hexaploid complex of plants currently included within *Poa cita* Edgar. From *Poa anceps*, *P. chathamica* differs by the upper surface of the leaf blades which are ribbed, and covered in fine prickly-teeth, by the spikelets which are 6.5–14.5 mm long, by the hexaploid (2n = 112) rather than diploid (2n = 28) chromosome number, and its geographic isolation on the Chatham Islands. From *P. xenica* it differs by hermaphrodite rather than dioecious habit, smaller panicles (120 cf. 250 mm in *P. xenica*), callus which bears loose crinkly hairs rather than being glabrous, and restriction to the Chatham Islands. Distinction from the swarding, widely creeping hexaploid forms of *P. cita* is less clear and requires further investigation. Currently the hexaploid forms of *P. cita* appear confined to the southern Cook Strait, North-West Nelson and northern Westland coastline.

## FLOWERING

September–January

## FRUITING

January–February

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Does best in full sun. However, in cultivation it rarely flowers.

## THREATS

It is threatened by habitat modification, stock grazing and competition from introduced plants such as marram grass.

## ETYMOLOGY

**poa**: Meadow grass

**chathamica**: From the Chatham Islands

## WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (June 2005). Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

**MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-chathamica/>