

Poa spania

COMMON NAME

Awahokomo poa

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Poa spania Edgar et Molloy

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 28$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Waitaki Valley, where it is known only from two small < 1 ha (collectively) limestone outcrops.

HABITAT

Confined to limestone tors and castles, where it grows amongst crevices, joints and on the associated rendzina soils.



Poa spania flower head. Photographer: Nick Head



Growth form of *Poa spania*. Photographer: Nick Head

FEATURES

Grey-green or purple-green short-lived perennial grass, forming slender tufts up to 220 mm tall. Leaves tough, wiry, < culms; branching mainly extravaginal, leaf-blades persistent. Leaf-sheath pale brown to purple, membranous, distinctly ribbed. Ligule 1-1.5 mm, lacerate, ciliate, underside pubescent-scabrid. Leaf-blade 60 x 1 mm, folded, midrib underside adorned with sparse prickle-teeth, upper side of leaf covered with minute stiff hairs; margins inrolled. Culm to 150 mm, slender, purple, bearing 1-2 cauline leaves, internodes glabrous. Panicle 20-60 mm, open, sparingly branched; branches usually smooth, bearing 1-2 spikelets at apices. Spikelets 2-3 mm, 2-3-flowered, silvery purplish green. Glumes subequal, 2-2.5 mm, margins wide, hyaline, lower glume elliptic-lanceolate, acute to acuminate 1-3-nerved, upper ovate, obtuse, 3-nerved. Lemma 2-2.4 mm, 5-nerved, ovate, obtuse. Palea 2 mm. Callus with minute fine hairs. Anthers 0.7-1.1 mm purplish. Stigma-styles 1-1.4 mm white.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Poa lindsayi* Hook.f. which differs by the intravaginal innovations, shorter, truncate, glabrous ligule, and shorter glumes and anthers.

FLOWERING

November - January

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple

FRUITING

December - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from division of existing plants. Probably easy from seed if seed can be obtained. Dislikes humidity.

THREATS

Threatened by the very small habitat area it occupies which is subjected to frequent weed invasion by hawkweeds (*Hieraceum* spp.), *Sedum acre* L. and cocksfoot grass (*Dactylis glomerata* L.).

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available. A few plants are held in private gardens.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses*. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 pp.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Poa spania* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-spania/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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