

Schoenus tendo

COMMON NAMES

kauri sedge, kauri schoenus

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rush-like sedge up to 1 m tall. **Rhizome** short, hard, lignaceous, up to 4 mm diameter, loosely covered in brown or greyish-brown bracts. **Culms** densely crowded, erect or drooping (often forming dense tangles), 0.4–1.2 m long, c. 1 mm diameter, light green to dark green, glossy. **Leaves** reduced to sheathing mucronate bracts, dark red-purple, almost black, the mucro more elongated in the uppermost bracts; mouth of sheath fringed by cobwebby hairs. **Panicle** 15–120 mm long, very narrow, with more or less distant fascicles of 3–4 branchlets, each fascicle subtended by a sheath 0.5–1.5 mm long, ciliate at the mouth; branchlets flexuous, laterally compressed and toothed along edges, each bearing a solitary spikelet or branched again. **Spikelets** 5–8 mm long, 2–4-flowered, linear-lanceolate, dark brown to almost black. **Glumes** 10–13, ovate lanceolate acute, margins ciliate towards the apex with tangled woolly hairs, the lower 6–8 glumes shorter, empty, 2–4 succeeding glumes fertile, the 2 upper glumes empty. **Hypogynous bristles** 3–6, thread-like, less than or greater than nut. **Stamens** 2. **Style-branches** 2–(3). **Nut** 1.5 × 1.0 mm, pale cream or light brown, unequally biconvex, obovoid, obtuse to retuse, surface smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the large often drooping green culms, sheaths fringed with cobwebby hairs, and preference for poorly drained clay soils (usually in gumland scrub) or under kauri. It could only be confused with *Schoenus carsei* Cheeseman which is confined to acidic peat bogs and lake margins, has yellow-green to orange-green culms, and whose sheaths lack the distinctive cobwebby orifices diagnostic of *S. tendo*. *Schoenus tendo* also differs from *S. carsei* by having mostly 2 rather than 3 style-branches.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island from North Cape to about the southern Waikato, near Awakino and the Bay of Plenty.

HABITAT

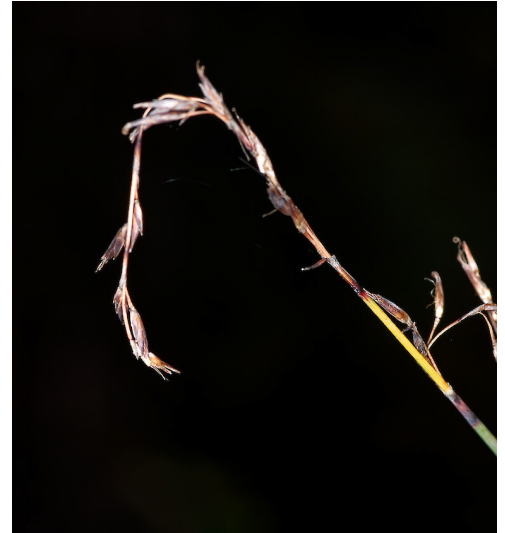
Coastal to lowland. Mostly in gumland or tea tree scrub and in regenerating kauri (*Agathis australis* (D. Don) Lindl.) forest. Sometimes persistent on clay hills covered to pasture. Rarely colonising the margins of peat bogs.

GENUS

Schoenus

FAMILY

Cyperaceae



Oratia Valley, Waitakere Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Whitianga, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY

Schoenus tendo (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Chaetospora tendo Banks et Sol. ex Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–January

FRUITING

October–July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Can be grown from the division of whole plants and fresh seed but resents root disturbance. Best in a permanently damp, somewhat acidic soil in full sun.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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

ETYMOLOGY

schoenus: Rush

NVS CODE

SCHTEN

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.

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.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/schoenus-tendo/>

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