

Schoenus tendo

COMMON NAME

kauri sedge, kauri schoenus

SYNONYMS

Chaetospora tendo Banks et Sol. ex Hook.f.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

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

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

SCHTEN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 70

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

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.



Whitianga, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Oratia Valley, Waitakere Range. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

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), 0.4-1.2m 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 x 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 *S. carsei* 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.

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.

ETYMOLOGY

schoenus: Rush

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

MORE INFORMATION

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