

Sporadanthus traversii

COMMON NAMES

Chatham Island bamboo rush,

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender, upright to sprawling dioecious perennial, 0.6–1.8–(2.5) m tall, forming dense somewhat flaccid rafts. **Rhizome** 3–10 mm diameter, horizontal, sparingly branched, covered with tightly appressed, overlapping scales; scales 3–12 × 2–12 mm, broadly ovate to ± deltoid, chartaceous, dark brown, lustrous, apex rounded and mucronate. **Roots** 3–4 mm diameter, 50–120 mm long, grey, with few (if any) rootlets. **Culms** up to 2 m long, 1–5 mm diameter, gradually tapering toward distal end, firm, flexuose, slender, terete, smooth, dark green-brown to brown, often blotched black; branched in upper $\frac{1}{3}$, branches numerous, firm, flexuose, scrambling, terete; basal 50–65 mm of culm slightly swollen with soft, spongy, light brown tissue; base with 3–7 loosely appressed, overlapping scales; scales 8–25 × 10–12 mm, ovate to narrowly ovate, coriaceous, light brown to brown, nerves distinct, apex rounded and mucronate. **Leaves** along culm solitary, distant; lamina 15–30 × 6–11 mm, narrowly ovate, chartaceous, tan, brown to grey-brown, appressed to and sheathing culm, nerves distinct; margins entire to praemorse; apex rounded, mucronate. **Inflorescence** a terminal panicle, often with cymose branching near base, 30–150–(200) mm long, dark dull brown, upright to spreading; male and female inflorescences sparse, not crowded; flowers subtended by 2 bractlets, subtended by 1 bract; inflorescence branchlets subtended by reduced leaves. **Bracts** 5.5–10.0 × 2.6–3.0 mm, ovate, narrowly ovate to lanceolate, light brown, membranous, apex acuminate, margins fimbriate. **Bractlets** 5.2–5.8 × 1.0–1.6 mm, lanceolate, membranous, light brown to yellow-brown, apex acuminate, margins entire. **Flowers** pedicellate to almost sessile. **Tepals** 6, in 2 whorls of 3, 4.0–6.0 × 1.0–1.2 mm, lanceolate, light brown, channelled, keeled, apex strongly acuminate. **Male flowers** with 3 stamens; filaments 1.6–3.0 mm long, anthers 1.8–2.3 mm long, cream, pollen yellow; pistil rudimentary. **Female flowers** with 1 pistil; style 1.0–1.5 mm long, pale orange, papillose on upper surface; ovary 0.6–0.7 × 0.3–0.4 mm, ellipsoid, brown to light brown, glossy; staminodes 3, each 1.5–1.6 mm long. **Fruit** 3.0–3.5 × 1.0–1.2 mm, oblong-ellipsoid, light brown to brown, surmounted by persistent short style; indehiscent. **Seed** 1.2–1.5 × 0.9–1.0 mm, oblong to broadly ovate, dark brown.



Sporadanthus traversii. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Sporadanthus traversii. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the North Island endemic *Sporadanthus ferrugineus* de Lange, Heenan et B.D.Clarkson by its restriction to Chatham Island; by the culms which are 1–5 mm rather than 10–15 diameter; tepals which are keeled and acuminate rather than not keeled and mucronate, and 4–6 mm rather than 2–3 mm long; by the fruit which is oblong-ellipsoid rather than ellipsoid, 3.0–3.5 mm rather than 1.0–1.5 mm long, and indehiscent; and by the seed which is 1.2–1.5 × 0.9–1.0 mm rather than 0.7–0.8 × 0.5–0.6 mm long.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Chatham Island only

HABITAT

Found mainly on wet peat domes, also occurring in peaty dune hollows and on lake margins.

THREATS

It is threatened by burning, and to a lesser extent ploughing and sowing pasture species and also by prolonged cattle grazing in places. The weed species chilean guava (*Ugni molinae*) is a threat to some populations.

GENUS

Sporadanthus

FAMILY

Restionaceae

AUTHORITY

Sporadanthus traversii (F.Muell.) F.Muell.

SYNONYMS

Lepyrodia traversii F.Muell.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–February

FRUITING

February–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult, should not be removed from the wild. Has been grown from seed but difficult to maintain.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

traversii: Named after William Thomas Locke Travers (1819–1903) who was an Irish lawyer, magistrate, politician, explorer, naturalist, photographer. He lived in New Zealand from 1849 and was a fellow of the Linnean Society.

NVS CODE

SPOTRA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 18

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, ST, IE

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange PJ, Heenan PB, Clarkson BD, Clarkson BR. 1999. Taxonomy, ecology, and conservation of *Sporadanthus* (Restionaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 37(3): 413–431.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1999.9512645>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 18 January 2005. Description adapted from de Lange et al. (1999).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/sporadanthus-traversii/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/sporadanthus-traversii/>

PDF DATE

08 June 2026