

Stenostachys laevis

COMMON NAME

grassland wheatgrass

SYNONYMS

Asprella laevis Petrie, *Cockayneana laevis* (Petrie) Zotov, *Hystrix laevis* (Petrie) Allan, *Elymus laevis* (Petrie) Á.Löve et Connor

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Stenostachys laevis (Petrie) Connor

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

STELAE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island; only known from Reporoa Bog (North West Ruahine Range). South Island; throughout except Nelson, and Westland. Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT

Small grass of tussock grasslands, grey scrub, shaded cliff faces, and lake sides. Often in flushes. Occasionally coastal. From sea level to 1300 m a.s.l.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial grass, forming loose patches, these rooting and shooting freely at nodes. **Inflorescences** narrow, nodding, on long slender stems (culms). **Leaf-sheath** 5–10 cm, either covered in curved hairs or hairless. **Ligule** 0.5–1 mm, prominent, tips lacerated. **Leaf-blade** 15–25 cm × 1.5–2 mm, flat (often inrolled in coastal plants), thin, with a prominent midrib, hairless or finely hairy. **Culms** 50–75 cm, nodes inconspicuous, internodes hairless, slender. **Inflorescence** narrow, slender, 8–15 cm, of 10–25 spikelets > internodes. **Spikelets** 8–12 mm, of 1–2 florets. **Glumes** 2, awn-like, 2–6 mm, equal, 1-nerved. **Lemma** 6.5–8 mm, smooth except for prickly-teeth towards bifid tip, apex either spine-tipped (mucronate) or extended as a short, toothed, awn 0.5–1 mm. **Anthers** 1.6–2.6 mm. **Seed** 4 mm.



Ex. Lake Tennyson. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to the grasses of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *S. deceptorix* Connor and *S. gracilis* (Hook.f.) Connor by the lemma (lower set of bracts which enclose the flower, grass equivalent of petals) apex possessing between the lateral teeth either a spine-tip (mucronate) or short awned. *Stenostachys* grasses are perhaps most similar to *Anthosachne* spp. because the glumes are either absent or reduced and awn-like, and by the spikelets which are positioned edgewise along the inflorescence stem (rachis) rather than side-on as in *Anthosachne*. Inrolled leaves of coastal plants become flat in cultivation.

FLOWERING

January–March

FRUITING

March–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easy from rooted pieces, divisions of whole plants and from fresh seed. Grows best in light shade.

THREATS

Stenostachys laevis faces no apparent threats but it is certainly uncommon, and easily overlooked. Because of this, there are few recent >1980 records.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/stenostachys-laevis/>