



# *Simplicia laxa*

*Simplicia laxa* is one of five threatened grassy plants included in a national recovery plan. They all grow in dry fertile sites in the eastern South Island. These places may be used for farming, quarrying or recreation and are also often of significance to Māori. Hopefully with collaboration between all those involved it will be possible to find compatible ways of managing these places. A first step towards this is helping people recognise the plants.

## About *Simplicia laxa*

### Description:

Perennial grass forming loose tufts or dense straggling mats. Leaves flat, pale green, 1.5-2mm wide, 6-10cm long; upper surface smooth or slightly hairy, lower surface with scattered bristly hairs on veins. Leafsheath strongly ribbed, hairy. Ligule 1-3mm long, with irregular ragged margin and short white hairs. Seed head an open panicle 10-15 cm long, with lower branches usually bent downwards; spikelet single flowered 2.5-3mm long with hairy stalk.



Photo: John Barkla



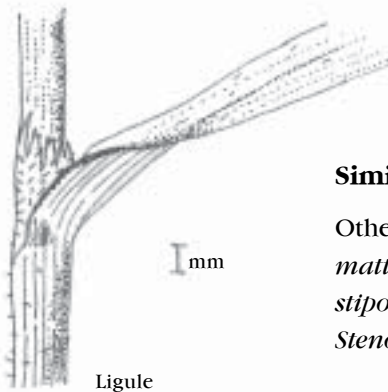
Photo: Te Papa Herbarium



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



Spikelet



Ligule

Drawings: Cathy Jones, adapted from Peter Johnson 1995

### Distinguishing features:

Combination of long, irregularly ragged ligule, minute teeth on leaf margin and single-flowered spikelets covered in short fine hairs. *Simplicia buchananii* has fine prickly teeth on spikelets.

### Similar plants:

Other grasses such as *Poa imbecilla*, *Poa matthewsii*, *Agrostis petriei*, *Microlaena stipoides*, *Simplicia buchananii*, *Stenostachys gracilis*

### Distribution:

Otago. There is an old record from the Wairarapa.

### Status:

Nationally endangered.

### Habitat:

Fertile, well drained, sheltered sites under rock overhangs or in crevices where there is little competition from other plants. Particularly on or under east or south facing schist and limestone outcrops. It will tolerate low light and seasonally dry soil.

### Threats:

Intensive grazing and burning. Introduced grasses and other weeds (especially *Hieracium lepidulum*). Recreational activities.

## Department of Conservation contacts

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Photos: John Barkla

