



# Limestone plume grass

## *Dichelachne lautumia*

Limestone plume grass 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 have multiple uses and be valued by many people including Māori. Hopefully, with collaboration between all those concerned, it will be possible to find compatible ways of managing these places. A first step towards this is helping people recognise the plants.

### About Limestone plume grass



#### Description:

A tufted grass 45-65cm tall. Leaves stiff, grey-green, 3-6 mm wide, slightly rough, strongly ridged on upper surface.

Flowerheads erect, compact, tapered, up to 16cm long and 1cm wide; florets 4-5mm long, green to straw-coloured; awn (bristle-tip) up to 12mm long.

Leaves, stems and flowerheads often have reddish-purple tinge. Plants retain much dead material.



Photo: Jan Clayton-Greene



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



Drawings: Cathy Jones

**Distinguishing features:**

Awns shorter than those of other plume grasses, giving the heads a much less plumed appearance.

Grey-green to red-purple colouring.

**Similar plants:**

Common plume grass (*Dichelachne crinita*) and other plume grasses.

**Distribution:**

Confined to two areas in South Marlborough

**National Threat Status:**

Range Restricted

**Habitat:**

Dry, sunny, free-draining river terraces and open debris slopes of blocky limestone, subject to occasional disturbance.

**Threats:**

Competition from exotic grasses and other weeds.



Photo: Jan Clayton-Greene

**Department  
of  
Conservation  
contacts**

- Biodiversity Ranger,  
South Marlborough Area, PO Box 51, Renwick.  
Phone: 03 572 9100 email: jclaytongreene@doc.govt.nz

- Cathy Jones, botanist,  
Nelson-Marlborough Conservancy, Private Bag 5, Nelson.  
Phone: 03 546 9335 email: cjones@doc.govt.nz