Gunnera arenaria

COMMON NAMES
sand gunnera

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD, DPT, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Low growing herb, mat forming. **Stolons** rather stout, usually creeping through sand, branched, up to approximately 40 cm. long. **Leaves** on stout, more or less flat, amplexicaul petioles up to 5 cm. long; lamina rather diversely shaped (on same plant) oblong to ovate to sub-rhombic, cuneate to subcordate at base, subcoriaceous, grey-green, 7–12–(20) × 9–15 mm., subglabrous, coarsely crenate, sometimes lobed. **Inflorescence** up to 7 cm. long, flowers sessile. **Staminate flower** with filiform calyx-lobes, minute bracts; petals 2, about lanceolate, glabrous, more or less 2 mm. long; filaments obsolete. **Pistillate flowers** with triangular calyx-lobes more or less 6 mm. long; styles filiform, up to 5 mm. long. **Drupes** clavate to obconic, patent to pendulous, more or less apiculate, on elongated scapes, yellow to pale red, more or less 4–6 mm long.

Mason Bay, Rakiura. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 19/04/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

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DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura from the Pouto Peninsula south and mainly westerly in its distribution. Occurring locally throughout.

HABITAT
A coastal species of damp sand ground, dune slacks and swales, and along tidal river margins. It also grows on coastal sandstone bluffs in some parts of the country.

THREATS
At risk from coastal development, wetland drainage and the spread of invasive weeds. Some populations have been destroyed by coastal erosion.

GENUS
Gunnera

FAMILY
Gunneraceae

AUTHORITY
Gunnera arenaria Cheeseman

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November–March

FRUITING
November–May

ETYMOLOGY
gunnera: Named after Bishop Gunner, a Swedish botanist
arenaria: Sand dweller

NVS CODE
GUNARE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 34

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CD, DP, RR
2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP
2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Gradual Decline
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Northland: 2026 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Critical | Qualifiers: DPS DPT RR Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau" Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.

ATTRIBUTION
Description adapted by M. Ward from Allan (1961).
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/gunnera-arenaria/

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