

Chionochloa crassiuscula subsp. crassiuscula

COMMON NAMES

pungent snow tussock

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short, stout, robust tussocks with smooth, pungent, straight, deciduous leaves, which leave many imbricate old sheaths. **Leaf-sheath** to 80 mm, glabrous, pale or dark brown, shining above, darkened below, sometimes purpled or reddened, persistent, entire, compressed, sometimes apical tuft of hairs to 1 mm. **Ligule** to 1 mm long. **Leaf-blade** to 300 × 6 mm, coriaceous, curved and keeled, shortly tapering to very pungent apex, upper surface with abundant prickle-teeth at base, disarticulating at ligule, abaxially glabrous except for prickle-teeth towards apex, adaxially papillate but with some prickle-teeth especially near ligule; margin thickened, long hairs below or sometimes with prickle-teeth. **Culm** to 65 cm, often purpled, often hairy below inflorescence. **Inflorescence** to 15 cm, open, pulvinate; spikelets often paired on flexuous branches; rachis, branches and pedicels with mixed long and short hairs or rachis hairy on margins only. **Spikelets** of up to 7 golden florets. **Glumes** thin, purpled, acute or mucronate from between teeth or aristate to erose, greater than or equal to adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 12 mm, shortly 1–3-nerved, glabrous, upper to 16 mm, 5–7-nerved, margin often long hairy below otherwise glabrous. **Lemma** to 4.5 mm, shining; hairs dense on margin and aside central nerve, sparse or absent elsewhere < sinus; lateral lobes to 6.5 mm including awn to 3 mm, or triangular-acute or long acute; central awn to 12 mm slightly twisting and markedly reflexed from flat column to 2 mm. **Palea** to 7 mm. **Callus** to 1 mm, hairs to 2.5 mm. **Rachilla** to 1.5 mm. **Lodicules** to 2 mm. **Anthers** to 4 mm. **Ovary** to 0.75 mm; stigma-styles to 3.5 mm. **Seed** to 3 mm.

HABITAT

Upper montane, subalpine or alpine. Usually in herbfields where it may be the dominant species. Also boggy meadows, and scrub.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, St
[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

THREATS

Not threatened. Listed because it is a naturally uncommon, regional endemic.

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Chionochloa crassiuscula (Kirk) Zotov subsp. *crassiuscula*



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SYNONYMS

Danthonia pungens (Cheeseman) Zotov

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

November–January

FRUITING

December–April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Florets are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Often difficult. Can be grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces but tend to be very slow growing. Prefers a permanently damp, acidic soil and semi-shade. Plants must never be allowed to dry out.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

CHISCR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, St

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chionochloa-crassiuscula-subsp-crassiuscula/>

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