Chionochloa juncea

COMMON NAME
North Westland snow tussock

SYNONYMS
Danthonia raoulii var. teretifolia Petrie; Danthonia rigida var. teretifolia (Petrie) Zotov

FAMILY
Poaceae

AUTHORITY
Chionochloa juncea Zotov

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Grasses

NVS CODE
CHIJUN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR
2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR
2004 | Range Restricted

Denniston, Westland. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Westland (Denniston and Stockton Plateaus).

HABITAT
Montane to subalpine. Locally common in scrub, tussock grassland and swampy ground overlying coal measures.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FAC: Facultative
Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall, rush-like, red tussock with swollen bases from rootstock clothed in old leaf-sheaths, leaves persistent, ultimately falling below sheath with one fracture. **Leaf-sheath** to 150 mm, dark brown, entire, persistent, internerves hairy but often appearing glabrous, margin long hairy above, apical tuft of hairs to 4 mm. **Ligule** to 0.5 mm. Leaf-blade to 700 × 1 mm, acicular rush-like, finally falling with top part of sheath, abaxially glabrous sometimes with long hairs below aside prominent, shining, hollow keel, becoming glabrous, adaxially with weft of long hairs at base, prickle-teeth above; margin with long hairs below glabrous above. **Culm** to 900 mm, internodes glabrous. Inflorescence to 200 mm, open, spikelets on long, pulvinate, flexuous branches; rachis and branches sparsely short hairy below becoming glabrous except for few hairs at axils and below spikelets. **Spikelets** of up to 6 purpled florets. **Glumes** glabrous, < adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 11 mm, 3-nerved, upper to 12 mm, 5-nerved. **Lemma** to 5.5 mm; hairs dense on margin, very few aside central nerve, glabrous elsewhere, < sinus; lateral lobes up to 4 mm, including awn up to 2.5 mm; central awn up to 10 mm, reflexed from 1 mm flat column. **Palea** to 6 mm. **Callus** to 1 mm, hairs to 3 mm. **Rachilla** to 0.8 mm. Lodicules to 0.5 mm. **Anthers** to 3.5 mm. **Ovary** to 0.5 mm; stigma-styles to 2 mm. **Seeds** to 2 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to the grasses of New Zealand

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in an acidic, damp soil in full sun or partial shade. Plants dislike drying out and will not tolerate drought or long periods of humidity. Very slow growing. An unusual tussock whose rush-like foliage is very attractive.

THREATS

Widespread within the coal measures of North Westland. In most places it is secure, however, open cast coal mining now threatens some large populations.

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass
juncea: Rush-like

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

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.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chionochloa-juncea/