

Aciphylla colensoi

COMMON NAME

giant speargrass, taramea

FAMILY

Apiaceae

AUTHORITY

Aciphylla colensoi Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

ACICOL

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Large thick spikey green-leaved clumps with an obvious yellow flower spike. Leaf midrib obvious and red or reddish-orange

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. Mt Hikurangi south to mid-Canterbury

HABITAT

Montane to low-alpine grassland and shrubland. 900-1500 m a.s.l.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small to large tufted herb to 1 m tall when in flower. Rosettes single or multiple. Leaves many, stout, 1-pinnate to occasionally 2-pinnate, to 30-50 cm long; sheath thin, to 6 cm long; stipules stiff, simple or occasionally with small accessory pinnules, to 70 cm long x 4 mm wide, tapering, pungent; petioles to 10 cm long, stout, winged; lower internodes (inter-pinna spacing) 3-4 cm long, decreasing up leaf; pinnae 2-4 pairs, slender, strongly serrulate, midrib broad, prominent, red to orange, lower laminae of pinna to c. 20-40(-45) cm long x c. 12 mm wide, narrowing to pungent apex. Flowering stem of male and female similar (female narrower and darker), narrow-oblong, 1 m or more long; lower bract sheaths to 30 x 12 mm tapering to long pungent tips; lower bract lamina ribbed, c. 10 cm long x 3-4 mm wide, with stout prominent red to yellow midrib, apex with pungent point to 3 mm long. Umbels crowded, distributed along from near base of flower spike peduncle; umbellules crowded, on slender rays to 1 cm long. Fruit of two mericarps; mericarps narrow to elliptic, (7.0-)8.0-12.0 mm, with 3-4(-5) even narrowly winged ribs, other ribs not evident, vittae evident as dark ribs between wings or largely obscured



Ruahine range. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Aciphylla colensoi. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar in some aspects to *Aciphylla scott-thomsonii*, but this species is larger, glaucous and without the obvious reddish midveins.

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

LIFE CYCLE

Winged schizocarps are dispersed primarily by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

ETYMOLOGY

aciphylla: From the Latin *acicula* 'needle' and the Greek *phyllum* 'leaf', meaning needle-leaf.

colensoi: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Allan (1961), Mark Adams (1995) and Webb, C.J. & Simpson (2001).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Alla, H. H. 1961. *Flora of New Zealand, Volume 1: Indigenous Tracheophyta - Psilopsida, Lycopsidea, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledons*. Botany Division, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Wellington, New Zealand.

Mark, A.F.; Adams, N.M. 1995. *New Zealand alpine plants*, 2nd Edition. Godwit Publishing, Auckland

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

Webb, C.J. & Simpson, M.J.A. 2001. *Seeds of NZ gymnosperms and dicotyledons*. Manuka Press, Christchurch

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/aciphylla-colensoi/>