

Festuca actae

COMMON NAMES

Banks Peninsula fescue

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender tussock with intravaginal branches, with fine and long glaucous leaf-blades. **Leaf-sheath** 50–100 mm, stramineous occasionally reddened, glabrous, striate, margins becoming membranous; apical auricles 0.4–0.7 mm, truncate or rounded, ciliate. **Ligule** as for auricles. **Collar** 0.6–1.7 mm, manifestly thickened, usually becoming brown coloured, adaxially with many small white hairs. **Leaf-blade** 200–600 × 0.4–0.7 mm, terete or hexagonal and ribbed, glaucous, glabrous except for prickle-teeth at pointed apex, disarticulating at collar, adaxially and on margin a multitude of small (0.10–0.15 mm) white hairs. **Culm** 250–600 mm, erect or geniculate at base, nodes 2–3 evident, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 50–250, with 7–9 nodes of 10–30 spikelets; basal branches 40–50 mm, binate, lax, of 2–6 spikelets and naked below, soon becoming single ascending branches, uppermost 3–5 spikelets solitary on pedicels; rachis glabrous or sparsely prickle-toothed below becoming more so, branches and pedicels prickle-toothed. **Spikelets** 10–17 × 6 mm, of 4–12 florets. **Glumes** unequal, keeled, prickle-teeth on keel and at apex, variously elsewhere, usually green centrally lighter at margins, sometimes purpled, margin ciliate; lower 3.0–4.5 mm, 1-nerved, long triangular acute, upper 4.5–7.5 mm, 3-nerved occasionally 5-nerved, narrowly ovate, acute to obtuse. **Lemma** 6–9 mm, rounded, lobes small (0.1–0.2 mm), glaucous, prickle-teeth from outer nerve to ciliate margin, scattered elsewhere, denser near awn; awn 0.1–2.5 mm. **Palea** 6–8 mm, sometimes > lemma, deeply bifid, keels toothed to base or nearly so, flanks and interkeel hairy above. **Callus** 0.2–0.5 mm, margin very short stiff hairy; articulation flat. **Rachilla** 1.0–1.5 mm, very shortly antrorsely stiff hairy. **Lodicules** 0.7–1.5 mm, lobed or entire, hair-tipped. **Anthers** 3.5–4.4 mm, yellow. **Ovary** 0.5–1.0 mm, hispid hairs at apex (in 2 lateral groups or occasionally surrounding apex); stigma-styles 1.4–2.8 mm. **Seed** 3–4.8 mm.

DISTRIBUTION

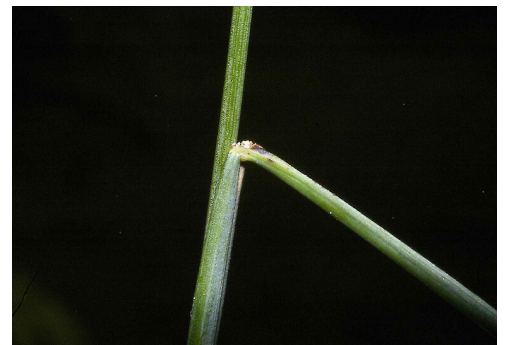
Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Banks Peninsula).

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. On rocks, rock outcrops, bluffs, talus and stabilised, sparsely vegetated slopes



Festuca actae. Photographer: Alan Stewart, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In cultivation. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

Range Restricted—a Banks Peninsula endemic that is widespread and not threatened.

GENUS

Festuca

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Festuca actae Connor

SYNONYMS

Festuca ovina subsp. matthewsii var. grandiflora Howarth; Festuca novae-zelandicae var. grandiflora (Howarth) St.-Yves; Festuca ovina subsp. novae-zelandiae var. grandiflora Howarth; Festuca ovina subsp. matthewsii var. eu-matthewsii Howarth; Festuca petriei forma tenuifolia Howarth

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Florets are dispersed by wind, water and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An attractive grass tolerant of most conditions but dislikes humidity.

CULTIVATION

Commonly sold as *Festuca* cv. Banks Peninsula.

ETYMOLOGY

festuca: From the Latin festuca 'stem' or 'blade of grass'

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

FESACT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

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/festuca-actae/>

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