

Bolboschoenus medianus

COMMON NAME

purua grass

SYNONYMS

Scirpus medianus Cook

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Bolboschoenus medianus (Cook) Soják

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

BOLMED

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland in saltmarshes and other poorly drained saline areas, occasionally found along freshwater rivers and lakes. Sometimes invades pasture abutting tidal streams and estuaries.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



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



In cultivation ex Kawhia. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Summer-green, bulbous perennial forming mostly densely clumped patches. **Rhizome** 3–5 mm diameter, woody, horizontal, long-creeping, dark brown, apices terminated by globose, ligneous tubers. **Culms** 1–(2) per tuber, 0.7–1.5 m tall, 4–5 mm diameter, triquetrous, striated, smooth except just below inflorescence where scabrid on angles; basal sheaths loose, membranous, septate, brown. **Leaves** numerous, $\pm \geq$ culms, 450–500 × 6–8 mm, double-folded but flattened, grass-like, tapering, coriaceous, margins and midrib scabrid towards apices; sheaths long, closed, coriaceous. **Inflorescence** a terminal, compound, irregular umbel; rays 4–6, unequal, 20–100 mm long, bearing clusters of 1–6 spikelets, a sessile glomerule of spikelets at the base of the rays; involucre subtending bracts similar to leaves, greater than inflorescence, unequal, 150–250 × 3–6 mm, as many as, or 1–2 fewer than rays. **Spikelets** 10–20 mm long, ovoid, or more or less cylindrical, dull red-brown. **Glumes** membranous, pubescent, apices cleft or lacerate, with a scabrid, recurved awn. **Hypogynous bristles** up to 6, in length < nut, persistent or shedding, red-brown, retrorsely scabrid. **Stamens** 3. **Style-branches** 2–3. **Nut** 3.0–4.0 × 2.0–2.5 mm, obovate, dorsiventrally compressed and plano-convex or trigonous with obtuse dorsal angle and convex sides, apiculate, maturing greyish to black and glossy.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other two indigenous species, *Bolboschoenus caldwellii* (Cook.) Soják and *B. fluviatilis* (Torr.) Soják by the nuts which are compressed rather than trigonous (as in *B. fluviatilis*) and with convex rather than depressed (concave) sides (as in *B. caldwellii*) and by the 2–3 style branches, rather than consistently 2 in *B. caldwellii* or mostly 3 in *B. fluviatilis*.

FLOWERING

October–January

FRUITING

December–May

LIFE CYCLE

Bristly nuts are dispersed by water and possibly wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Will grow in almost any soil but prefers a sunny, damp soil. Ideal as a pond plant or for planting along tidal streams.

ETYMOLOGY

bolboschoenus: From Greek: bolbos (swelling or bulb) and schoinos (rush, reed), from the supposed difference from the genus Schoenus in having bulbous tubers

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

In the Waikato this species is abundant along the tidal stretches of the Piako and Waitoa Rivers of Hauraki Plains, the Waikato River (to about Taupiri) and also around the larger lakes of the Huntly Basin.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 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/bolboschoenus-medianus/>