

Juncus caespiticus

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: CI, DPR, DPS, DPT, PD, SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted, dark green to red-green perennial forming circular patches up to 100 mm diameter. **Stems** 80–450 × 1–2 mm. **Leaves** numerous, all basal, grass-like, > inflorescence. **Flowers** 3 mm long; outer tepals acute or acuminate, shorter than the inner, more membranous, subobtuse tepals. **Stamens** 6. **Capsule** more or less equal in length to tepals, obtuse, mucronate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *J. planifolius* R.Br., *J. lomatophyllus* Spreng., and *J. dregeanus* Kunth by the inflorescence which is usually a single, globose head, and by the broadly channelled leaves. Since the 1980s a very similar, bright green to yellow green-leaved rush with dark black globose inflorescences has colonised the west coast of the North Island, initially around the Waitakere Coast but now known as far north as Hokianga and possibly as far south as Manawatu. This rush was subsequently identified as *Juncus sonderianus* Buchenau.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island. Present in Australia.

HABITAT

Usually coastal. Growing in or near damp seepages, in dune swales or around the margins of brackish lagoons and streams, or on steep, damp cliff faces festooned with *Austroblechnum banksii* (Hook.f.) Gasper et V.A.O.Dittrich, *Sonchus kirkii* Hamlin, *Marchantia macropora* Mitt. and *Nostoc*. Also recorded on rock bluffs up to 500 m a.s.l.

THREATS

Declining in the North Island, and locally extinct in some regions but the reasons for the decline are not clear. Status in the South Island is uncertain.

GENUS

Juncus

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus caespiticus Meyer in Lehm.

SYNONYMS

Australojuncus caespiticus (E.Mey.) Záveská Drábková & Pročková



Herbarium specimen: AK 289026.

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Herbarium specimen: AK 289026.

Photographed with permission of Auckland

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Proćków et al. (2023) proposed a taxonomic segregation of *Juncus* into six genera based on molecular and morphological evidence. Whilst it has long been recognised that the current circumscription of *Juncus* includes morphologically divergent taxa—reflected in the recognition of numerous subgenera and sections—the consensus view of the NZPCN website taxonomy subcommittee, taking into consideration advice from Australian *Juncus* expert Dr Karen Wilson (NSW Herbarium) and others in Europe is that the generic segregations proposed need further consideration and testing. Accordingly, it has been decided to maintain the current broad circumscription of *Juncus*, but to include all new names as synonyms in factsheets. We thank, in particular, Dr Wilson for her helpful comments.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–January

FRUITING

October–July

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. An interesting pot plant or species for a damp place within a rockery. Has considerable horticultural potential.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

ETYMOLOGY

juncus: From the Latin *jungere* ‘to tie or bind’, the stems of some species being used to make cord (Johnson and Smith)

caespiticius: From the Latin *caespes* ‘tuft’ or ‘sod of turf’, meaning made of turf or turf-like

NVS CODE

JUNCAE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR, SO Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Moore, L. B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.
- Proćków, J., Záleská Drábková, L. 2023. A revision of the Juncaceae with delimitation of six new genera: nomenclatural changes in *Juncus*. *Phytotaxa* 622(1): 17–41. <https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.622.1.2>.
- 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* 11: 285–309.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 September 2006). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/juncus-caespiticius/>

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25 May 2026