

Juncus planifolius

COMMON NAMES

grass-leaved rush

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Bright green, yellow-green to wine-red, tufted, grass-like perennial herb of rather variable stature. **Stems** 20.0–900.0 × 0.5–1.5 mm. **Leaves** numerous, all basal, up to 100 mm × 8 mm, usually less than stem, solid, flat, non-septate, lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, tapered gradually from base to the slightly dilated, acute, usually mucronate apex; sheaths broad without auricles, mostly pink-coloured, rarely cream. **Inflorescence** terminal, umbel-like and irregularly branched. **Flowers** numerous, 1.5–2.0 mm long, crowded in globose or hemispherical clusters at the ends of the numerous branchlets; tepals more or less equal, the outer acuminate, inner acute, all with light green centres and red-brown to wine-red margins. **Stamens** 3(–6). **Capsule** equal to or very slightly > tepals, lustrous brown to brownish-black, ovoid, mucronate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the usually many-flowered, umbel-like inflorescence and flat leaves; flower clusters up to 5 mm diameter and 2 mm long capsules. In a sterile state it could be mistaken for *Luzula* (wood rushes) but the leaves lack the characteristic sparse to densely villous margins typical of that genus. *Juncus planifolius* has a superficial similarity to *J. caespiticius* E.Meyer in Lehm., with which it occasionally grows. It differs from that species by its flat, not channelled leaves, and open umbellate rather than compact globose inflorescence. The flower heads of *J. planifolius* are often proliferous or infected by the powdery grey or bluish smut (*Sorosporium piluliformis* (Berkeley) McAlpine).

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Also Australia, Hawaii and South America.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 1000 m a.s.l.) in open, moist ground. Often found on fresh exposed damp clay, or along track sides or on the margins of drains. A common urban weed which has naturalised in the northern Hemisphere.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

DETAILED TAXONOMY



Fruit. Te Marua, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Leaf bases. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 12/08/2007, Licence: CC BY.

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus planifolius R.Br.

SYNONYMS

Juncus planifolius var. *chathamicus* Buch., *Australojuncus planifolius* (R.Br.) Závěská Drábková & Pročkůw

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Pročkůw 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

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

August–April

FRUITING

October–June

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Inclined to be invasive, and indeed occasionally seen as an urban weed of roadside blocked gutters.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

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

planifolius: From the Latin *planum* ‘flat surface’ and *folius* ‘leaf, meaning a flat leaf

NVS CODE

JUNPLA

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2024 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Regional conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Otago](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2024) report.

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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.

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson, A. T.; Smith, H. A. 1986. *Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning*. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

Proćków, J., Záveská Drábková, L. 2023. A revision of the Juncaceae with delimitation of six new genera: nomenclatural changes in *Juncus*. *Phytotaxa* 622(1): 17–41.

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-planifolius/>

PDF DATE

02 August 2025