

Alopecurus geniculatus

COMMON NAME

kneed foxtail

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Alopecurus geniculatus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

ALOGEN

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A sprawling mat-forming grass with creeping stems, often floating on water, with dense spiked flowerheads.

DISTRIBUTION

Common throughout.

HABITAT

Wide variety of wetland and aquatic habitats, rare in dry gravelly waste areas.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Sprawling grass rooting at the nodes, 15–45 cm tall; can form floating mats. **Stems** ascending from knee-like bends at the nodes. **Leaf-blade** 4–12 cm long and 1.5–2.5 mm wide with an acute tip. **Ligule** (1.5)–2–4.5 mm long, membranous. **Flower heads** are upright spikes 2–4 cm long comprised of densely crowded conspicuously awned spikelets.

SIMILAR TAXA

There are several similar sprawling wetland/aquatic grasses. *Paspalum distichum* has a shorter ligule and paired flower heads; *Glyceria* species have a boat-shaped leaf tip and cross-veins on the leaf sheath, and *Agrostis stolonifera* has a more open flower head.

FLOWERING

Spring and summer

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Orange

FRUITING

Summer to autumn



Waituna Lagoon, Southland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 17/03/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by water and contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1853

ORIGIN

Eurasia

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Pasture species.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

ETYMOLOGY

alopecurus: From the Greek alopekouros 'fox-tail'

geniculatus: From the Latin geniculum 'knee', meaning 'on bended knee', often used in reference to plants with stems bent on an angle

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.

Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication.

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Johnson PN, Brooke PA. 1989. Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington, NZ. 319 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/alopecurus-geniculatus/>