

Chionochloa crassiuscula subsp. torta

COMMON NAME

curly snow tussock

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1991)

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Chionochloa crassiuscula subsp. torta Connor

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

CHICST

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (east and west of Main Divide from about southern Marlborough and Westland to Fiordland).

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine. Often the dominant species in grasslands with impeded drainage or bogs.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



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



Ahuriri. Photographer: John Barkla, Date taken: 01/01/2013, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short, stout, robust, shining tussock with smooth, pungent, much twisted, deciduous and leaving leaves, with many imbricate old sheaths. **Leaf-sheath** to 120 mm, shining above, darkened below, sometimes purpled usually with many inter-rib hairs. **Leaf-blade** to 300 × 6 mm, keeled, drawn out into long tapering, twisting or curling, pointed apex; disarticulating at ligule, abaxially glabrous except for prickle-teeth towards apex, adaxially papillate but with some prickle-teeth especially near ligule; margin thickened, long hairs below or sometimes with prickle-teeth. **Culm** to 650 mm, often purpled, internodes usually hairy, often hairy below inflorescence. **Inflorescence** to 150 mm, open, pulvinate; spikelets often paired on flexuous branches; rachis, branches and pedicels with mixed long and short hairs or rachis hairy on margins only. **Spikelets** of up to 7 golden florets. **Glumes** thin, purpled, acute or mucronate from between teeth or aristate to erose, greater than or equal to adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 12 mm, shortly 1–3-nerved, glabrous, upper to 16 mm, 5–7-nerved, margin often long hairy below otherwise glabrous. **Lemma** to 6 mm, shining; hairs dense on margin and in mostly all internerves, usually absent from central nerve, < sinus; lateral lobes to 6.5 mm including awn to 3 mm, or triangular-acute or long acute; central awn to 12 mm slightly twisting and markedly reflexed from flat column to 2 mm. **Palea** to 7 mm. **Callus** to 1 mm, hairs to 2.5 mm. **Rachilla** to 1.5 mm. **Lodicules** to 2 mm. **Anthers** to 4 mm. **Ovary** to 0.75 mm; stigma-styles to 3.5 mm. **Seed** to 3 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

December–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Often difficult. Can be grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces but tend to be very slow growing. Prefers a permanently damp, acidic soil and semi-shade. Plants must never be allowed to dry out.

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chionochloa-crassiuscula-subsp-torta/>