

Chionochloa flavicans f. flavicans

COMMON NAME

snow tussock

SYNONYMS

Danthonia antarctica var. alpha elata Hook.f.

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Chionochloa flavicans Zotov f. flavicans

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Found in North Island from Coromandel to Hawke's Bay.

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine. Inhabiting sparsely vegetated cliff and rock faces, and talus slopes.



Lonely Bay, Whitianga. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Lonely Bay, Whitianga. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall, stout, often sprawling, flabellate tussock with persistent leaves and sheaths. **Leaf-sheath** to 150 mm, pinkish or purplish, chartaceous, entire, becoming fibrous, keeled, glabrous or with a few long hairs, apical tuft of hairs to 1 mm. **Ligule** to 0.7 mm. **Leaf-blade** to 750 × 8 mm, dark green to yellow-green, keeled, persistent, glabrous except for some short hairs above ligule and prickle-teeth on margins and abaxially at apex. **Culm** to 1.5 m, internodes glabrous. Inflorescence to 300 mm, clavate, dense and compact, not naked below; rachis smooth below, branches and pedicels densely scabrid and with some long hairs at branch axils. **Spikelets** of up to 4 distant florets. **Glumes** to 7 mm, broad, shallowly bifid, sometimes purpled, margins ciliate, prickle-teeth adaxially above, < nearest lemma lobes; lower 3-nerved, upper 5-nerved. **Lemma** to 6 mm; hairs dense on margin, usually fewer or none aside central nerve, rarely reaching sinus, prickle-teeth above adaxially and abaxially on nerves; lateral lobes up to 2.5 mm, conspicuously awned adjacent to a small lobe; central awn to 16 mm, reflexed, column absent. **Palea** to 6 mm, interkeel with prickle-teeth above. **Callus** to 1.5 mm, hairs to 4 mm. **Rachilla** to 0.25 mm. **Lodicules** to 1 mm. **Anthers** to 4 mm. **Ovary** to 1 mm; stigma-styles to 3 mm. **Seeds** to 3 mm

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Very closely related to *C. flavicans* f. *temata* from which it differs by its larger overall floret dimensions, less compact growth habit, and dark green to yellow green rather than slightly glaucous leaves.

FLOWERING

September–November

FRUITING

October–June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Very popular in cultivation. This is an attractive species that has proved suitable for a wide range of growing conditions.

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass

WHERE TO BUY

Commonly sold by most plant nurseries and garden centres. Very popular in cultivation.

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-flavicans-f-flavicans/>