

Chionochloa rubra subsp. occulta

COMMON NAME

red tussock

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1991)

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Chionochloa rubra subsp. *occulata* Connor

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

CHIRSO

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 (Nelson and West Coast to Cascade Plateau).

HABITAT

Upper montane to alpine in scrubland, or as a local dominant in tussock grassland.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall, slender, red tussock with crowded, erect, stiff, rush-like leaves. **Leaf-sheath** to 300 mm, dark brown, keeled, incurving, fracturing into short segments, inter-ribs with minute and long hairs, margin separating and coiling, apical tuft of hairs to 3 mm. **Ligule** to 1 mm. Leaf-blade to 1 m long, 1.2 mm diameter, falling with part of sheath; acicular rush-like, splitting longitudinally, keel hollow, abaxially glabrous but infrequently with long hairs near base, prickle-teeth towards apex, adaxially dense wefts of long hairs extending up leaf-blade or short hairs in rows, papillate or prickle-toothed above. **Culm** to 1.5 m, internodes sometimes long hairy, sheath glabrous. **Inflorescence** to 45 cm, open on pulvinate branches, glabrous except for long hairs at branch axils and short stiff hairs below spikelets, rarely becoming scabrid above. **Spikelets** of up to 9 florets. **Glumes** glabrous, acute, infrequently awned, \leq adjacent lemma lobes, lower to 12 mm, 1–3–5-nerved, upper to 14 mm, 3–5–7-nerved. **Lemma** to 6 mm; hairs dense on margin, $<$ sinus; lateral lobes to 6 mm including awn to 2.5 mm; central awn to 13 mm from twisting column to 3 mm. **Palea** to 8 mm. **Callus** to 1.5 mm, hairs to 4 mm. **Rachilla** to 0.75 mm. **Lodicules** to 1 mm. **Anthers** to 5 mm. **Ovary** to 1 mm; stigma-styles to 4 mm. **Caryopsis** to 3.5 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Morphologically distinguished from the rest of the *Chionochloa rubra* Zotov complex by the long weft of hairs on the upper leaf-blade surface which extends well above the ligule.

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. However, can be slow growing and dislikes warm, humid climates and drought. Though once established it can take plenty of abuse. The reddish leaves are especially attractive.

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass

rubra: Red

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (June 2005). 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-rubra-subsp-occulta/>