

# Chionochloa rubra subsp. rubra var. inermis

## COMMON NAME

Mt Egmont snow tussock

## SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1991)

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Chionochloa rubra* subsp. *rubra* var. *inermis* Connor

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

CHIRRI

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL, St

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Mt Taranaki or Mt Egmont)

## HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine and in some of the larger upper montane bogs. The dominant tussock of Mt Taranaki or Mt Egmont's grasslands and bogs (rarely in subalpine scrub).



Pouakai Range, Taranaki. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.



Pouakai Range, Taranaki. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall, slender, reddish-green tussock with crowded, erect, stiff, rush-like leaves. **Leaf-sheath** to 300 mm, dark brown, keeled, incurving, remaining entire or fracturing into short segments, margin separating and coiling, apical tuft of hairs to 3 mm. **Ligule** to 1 mm. **Leaf-blade** to 1 m long and 1.2 mm diameter, greenish, acicular rush-like, splitting longitudinally, keel hollow, undersides glabrous but infrequently with long hairs near base, prickle-teeth towards apex, upper surface papillate; margin smooth. **Culm** to 1.5 m, internodes glabrous but sometimes long hairy, sheath glabrous. Inflorescence to 450 mm, 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, less than or equal to adjacent lemma lobes, lower to 12 mm, 1–3–5-nerved, upper to 14 mm, 3–7-nerved. **Lemma** to 6 mm; hairs dense on margin, usually absent or sparse elsewhere, < sinus; lateral lobes to 6 mm including awn to 3 mm, rarely unawned; 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. **Seeds** to 3.5 mm.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Chionochloa rubra* Zotov subsp. *rubra* var. *rubra* from which var. *inermis* differs by the greenish rather than red to red-brown leaves; upper leaf-surfaces which are papillate rather than covered in fine prickle-teeth; by the smooth rather than scabrid leaf margins, and by the larger anthers (to 5.0 mm cf. 3.5 mm in var. *rubra*).

## FLOWERING

October–December

## FRUITING

November–May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. However, slow growing and dislikes warm, humid climates and drought. The unusual (for a member of the red tussock group) greenish foliage becomes more pronounced in winter.

## THREATS

Range Restricted endemic abundant within its only known location Mt Egmont National Park. There are no known serious threats to this tussock in the wild.

## ETYMOLOGY

**chionochloa**: Snow grass

**rubra**: Red

**inermis**: Not spiny, unarmed

## 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-rubra-var-inermis/>