

Festuca matthewsii subsp. aquilonia

COMMON NAME

northern blue fescue

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1998)

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Festuca matthewsii subsp. *aquilonia* Connor

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

FESMSA

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 (North-West Nelson (Mt Benson), central and southern Nelson from St Arnaud to Lewis Pass, Marlborough, Wairau Mountains and Richmond Range).

HABITAT

Subalpine and alpine tussock grasslands.



DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stiff scabrid leaved tussock with scabrid inflorescences of wide-angled branches of awned spikelets borne high above circular or hexagonal glaucous leaves. **Leaf-sheath** 50–150 mm, glabrous or minutely scabrid, keeled, stramineous, margins membranous, brown below; apical auricles 0.3–0.7 mm, ciliate. **Collar** usually swollen. **Leaf-blade** 150–300 × 0.5–0.7 mm, glaucous, hexagonal and ribbed or terete, abaxially minutely or strongly antrorsely prickle-toothed sometimes glabrous, adaxially with abundant short white antrorse hairs on ribs and margins. **Culm** 300–700 mm, usually greatly exceeding leaf-blades, nodes sometimes geniculate, uppermost conspicuous, upper internodes sparsely prickle-toothed or glabrous. **Panicle** 70–150 mm with 6–9 nodes, of 8–25 spikelets; open wide-angled pulvinate branches sometimes contracted or becoming so, naked below, basal branch solitary with 2–7 spikelets, uppermost 4–6 spikelets solitary on short pedicels; rachis, branches and pedicels with abundant small prickle-teeth especially on convex surfaces, longer prickle-teeth on margins. **Spikelets** 10.0–15.0 × 4.5 mm, of 4–9 florets. **Glumes** unequal, keeled with prickle-teeth above, centrally green-bronze, margins pale membranous, ciliate; lower 3.4–5.0 mm, 1-nerved, triangular acute, upper 4.5–7.0 mm, 3-nerved, long triangular acute to obovate acute. **Lemma** 4.5–7.0 mm, lobes small (0.05 mm) or 0, rounded below becoming keeled above, sparsely scabrid on margin below and near awn; awn 0.5–1–2 mm. **Palea** 5–7 mm, frequently > lemma, apex deeply bifid, ciliate, keels toothed $\frac{1}{2}$ – or more, interkeel hairs above, margins of flanks ciliate above. **Callus** 0.2–0.3 mm, margins sparsely bearded, articulation ± flat. **Rachilla** 1.0–1.5 mm, hairy, hairs short and stiff. **Lodicules** 0.8–1.1 mm, > ovary, often hair-tipped. **Anthers** 2.50–3.75 mm, yellow or purpled. **Ovary** 0.50–0.75 mm, hispid hairs at apex; stigma-styles 1.8–2.5 mm. **Seed** 3–3.5 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

FLOWERING

October–December

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, Yellow

FRUITING

November–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. An attractive grass tolerant of most conditions but dislikes humidity.

ETYMOLOGY

festuca: From the Latin festuca 'stem' or 'blade of grass'

matthewsii: After Mathews

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/festuca-matthewsii-subsp-aquilonia/>