

Juncus australis

COMMON NAME

leafless rush, wiwi

SYNONYMS

Agathryon australe (Hook. f.) Záveská Drábková & Pročková

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus australis Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE

JUN AUS

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

.Indigenous. Kermadec, North, South Islands. Present on Norfolk Island and Australia

HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane usually in damp pasture and swampy ground. Rarely within shrubland and open forest. Often on poorly drained clay soils. This species which flourishes in disturbed sites has probably increased its range following human settlement.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



L. Otamangakau, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



L. Otamangakau, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Broad, blue-green to grey-green loosely packed circular clumps, often with a few dead or live stems in the centre; occasionally not clump forming and with few stems. **Rhizome** 3–5 mm diameter, horizontal, just below soil surface (plants hard to pull out). **Flowering stems** 0.6–1.2 m tall, 1.5–4.0 mm diameter, hard, distinctly ridged, not shining, dull blue-green, glaucous to grey-green, pith interrupted, sometimes nearly absent, very rarely continuous. **Leaves** absent. **Basal bracts** numerous, very loosely sheathing chestnut-brown below grading through to straw-coloured in the uppermost bracts. **Inflorescence** apparently lateral, many-flowered, usually much branched, with flowers clustered at the ends of stout branchlet tips; sometimes condensed into a globose head > 15 mm diameter, with 1 or more, smaller, lateral clusters. **Flowers** 2.2–3.0 mm long, tepals pale green, later becoming light brown. **Stamens** 3(–4), rarely 3(–6). **Capsule** 2.3–3.0 mm long, equal or slightly > in length than tepals, ovoid to obovoid, obtuse, almost retuse at apex, pale greenish brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

The blue-green, glaucous to grey-green, ridged stems, and the usually interrupted to absent internal pith readily distinguish this species from other indigenous and exotic *Juncus* spp.

FLOWERING

September–December

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green

FRUITING

November–May

LIFE CYCLE

Mucilaginous seeds are dispersed by attachment, wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. Unlikely to prove a popular garden plant. Mostly regarded as a weed when it invades pasture.

ETYMOLOGY

juncus: From the Latin *jungere* 'to tie or bind', the stems of some species being used to make cord (Johnson and Smith)

australis: Southern

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally sold by specialist native plant nurseries

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Proćków et al. (2023) proposed a taxonomic segregation of *Juncus* into six genera based on molecular and morphological evidence. Whilst it has long been recognised that the current circumscription of *Juncus* includes morphologically divergent taxa—reflected in the recognition of numerous subgenera and sections—the consensus view of the NZPCN website taxonomy subcommittee, taking into consideration advice from Australian *Juncus* expert Dr Karen Wilson (NSW Herbarium) and others in Europe is that the generic segregations proposed need further consideration and testing. Accordingly, it has been decided to maintain the current broad circumscription of *Juncus*, but to include all new names as synonyms in factsheets. We thank, in particular, Dr Wilson for her helpful comments.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 September 2006). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A. 1986. *Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning*. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.
- Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.
- Pročków, J., Záveská Drábková, L. 2023. A revision of the Juncaceae with delimitation of six new genera: nomenclatural changes in *Juncus*. *Phytotaxa* 622(1): 17–41.
- Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309
- Mucilaginous seeds are dispersed by attachment, wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/juncus-australis/>