

Juncus distegus

SYNONYMS

Agathryon distegum (Edgar) Závieská Drábková & Pročková

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus distegus Edgar

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE

JUNDIS

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, South Island, Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Widespread but generally local in its occurrences. Coastal to upper montane (1200 m a.s.l.). Often fringing swamps, and in cloud forest common along board walks. Also present in drier hill country, and in tussock grassland. Tending to favour poorly drained clay soils.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Herbarium specimen: AK 217097.
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Herbarium specimen: AK 217097.
Photographed with permission of Auckland

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, dark green to red-green, wiry, tightly packed clumps. **Rhizome** 2–4 mm diameter, horizontal at or near surface (plants easily pulled from ground). **Flowering stems** 250–750 × 0.75–1.50 mm, more or less smooth, wiry-flexible, dull green, dark green, red-green to reddish, pith interrupted in a regular pattern by very small lacunae (gaps), pith partitions usually wider than cavities between. **Leaves** absent. **Basal bracts** short, closely sheathing, lower bracts bright red-brown, upper most straw-coloured. **Inflorescence** apparently lateral, compact, few-flowered, composed of two small clusters 10 mm wide, one pressed to stem, the other at the end of a longer, slender, pliant branchlet, occasionally each of the two clusters with a smaller subsidiary cluster. **Flowers** 2.3–3.0 mm long, tepals red-brown with light green centre at anthesis, becoming entirely red-brown at fruiting. **Stamens** 3–4, rarely more in occasional flowers. **Capsule** 2.5–3.0 mm long, often > in length than tepals, oblong-ovoid, obtuse, glossy, chestnut-brown, often with very dark brown tip.

SIMILAR TAXA

The delicate, slender, wiry dark green, green to reddish stems with their internally, evenly, interrupted pith and small inflorescences with usually two heads, one close set to the stem the other up to 10 mm distant and held out from the stem mark this species out from all the others except *J. filicaulis* Buchenau, which differs in having inflorescences usually in a single cluster, and capsules more or less equal in length rather than > than the tepals. The stems of *J. filicaulis* are 0.5–1.0 mm cf. 0.75–1.5 mm diameter in *J. distegus*, and blue- or grey-green rather than dark green to red-green.

FLOWERING

October–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Red/Pink

FRUITING

December–July

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and by the division of whole plants. A rather delicate species and not invasive.

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Pročków 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 AT, Smith HA. 1986. *Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning*. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.
- Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. *Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae*. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.
- Proćków, 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. <https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.622.1.2>.
- Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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