

Juncus effusus var. effusus

COMMON NAME

soft rush

SYNONYMS

Agathryon effusum (L.) Záveská Drábková & Pročková

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus effusus L. var. effusus

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE

JUNEVE

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Upright clump-forming leafless rush to 1.2 tall, with tall, soft*, cylindrical stems, with continuous pith. The open clustered flowerheads near the end of each stem are made up of many light brown flowers/capsules (fruit). *Stems squash much more easily between thumb and fingers than most other 'leafless' rushes.

DISTRIBUTION

Widespread and common throughout.

HABITAT

Wet pasture and a wide range of wet habitats, including peaty areas.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dense tuft-forming rush with short rhizomes. **Stems** 30–120 cm × 1.5–3 mm, cylindrical, bright or yellow-green, softer than most similar spp, easily split or compressed, smooth, shining; with continuous, cobwebby pith. **True leaves** absent. **Basal sheaths** reddish-brown, closely held to stem. **Seed head** not at end of stem, with many tiny green flowers along short, downward-curving branchlets. **Seed capsule** 2–3 mm long, oval, light brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to other tall leafless rushes, but has an open inflorescence with the lower branches decumbent and cobwebby continuous pith in the stem. The soft, easily compressed and broken stems are distinct.

FLOWERING

Spring to early summer



Juncus effusus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Lake Wiritoa. Jan 2009. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by animals, water or contaminated machinery.

YEAR NATURALISED

1864

ORIGIN

Europe, Asia and Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Rarely controlled, but can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation, susceptible to grazing.

ETYMOLOGY

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

NOTES ON TAXONOMY

Subgenus *Agathyron*, Section *Juncotypus* (Genuini) Kirschner (2002: Juncaceae 3).

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

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Healy and Edgar (1980).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication.

<http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-fact-sheets/freshwater-pest-species>

Healy, A.J. (1982). Identification of weeds and clovers. New Zealand Weed and Pest Control Society Publication. Editorial Services Limited, Featherston. 299 p.

Healy, A.J.; Edgar, E. (1980). Flora of New Zealand, Volume III. Adventive Cyperaceous, Petalous and Spathaceous Monocotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington. 220 p.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319 p.

Johnson, A. T. and Smith, H. A. 1986. Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.

Kirschner, J. (compiler) (2002). Juncaceae 3: *Juncus* subg. *Agathyron*, Species Plantarum: Flora of the World Part 8: 1–192.

Pročków, J., Závěská Drábková, L. 2023. A revision of the Juncaceae with delimitation of six new genera: nomenclatural changes in *Juncus*. *Phytotaxa* 622(1): 17–41.

MORE INFORMATION

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