

Juncus pallidus

COMMON NAME

giant rush, leafless rush

SYNONYMS

Juncus macrostigma Colenso *Agathryon pallidum* (R.Br.) Záveská
Drábková & Pročková

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus pallidus R.Br.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE

JUNPAL

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South, and Stewart Islands. Present in Australia and naturalised on Norfolk, Lord Howe and the Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland. Often in pastures where it can be as major weed. Usually in damp swampy hollows, on the margins of wetlands and lakes, in open shrubland on damp ground, or near saltmarshes in places that can be flooded by King tides.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Juncus pallidus - last seasons inflorescences, Oratia Native Plant Nurseries. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 03/05/2007, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Juncus pallidus close up of fruiting inflorescences, Oratia Native Plant Nurseries. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 03/05/2007, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Very robust, tall perennial forming dense patches up to 2 m tall. **Rhizome** 5–10 mm diameter, horizontal. **Flowering stems** 1–2 m tall, 3–8 mm diameter, erect, very rarely drooping, smooth, slightly glossy, light green or glaucous, soft, pith continuous. **Leaves** absent. **Basal sheathing bracts** numerous, lower ones shorter, upper ones larger, loosely sheathing, very obtuse with a long, hair-like mucro, light green, light brown or pinkish brown. **Inflorescence** apparently lateral, many-flowered, usually contracted into a dense head > 15 mm wide, or effuse with long stout, rigid branchlets. **Flowers** 2.3–3.0 mm long, clustered at branchlet apices, or evenly spaced along branchlets, on stout pedicels or almost sessile; tepals pale green, occasionally tinged with pink, maturing light brown, the outer rigid, the inner soft and membranous, almost colourless. **Stamens** 6. **Capsules** 2.8–3.6 mm long, usually distinctly > tepals, ovoid-trigonous, obtuse at the apex, very pale greenish brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Can be confused with *Juncus procerus* E.Meyer which is also an extremely robust species of similar habitats. However, *J. procerus* usually has dark green stems and the internal pith is interrupted not continuous. *Juncus pallidus* keys out with the very different looking *J. pauciflorus* R.Br. because both species have 6 stamens and their stems continuous, uninterrupted internal pith. *Juncus pauciflorus* is a very uncommon species with very slender, wiry, rather lax bright green stems, and finer, flexible rather than rigidly stout branchlets.

FLOWERING

October–January

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 and by the division of whole plants. An attractive, very robust species with beautiful blue-grey foliage. This species is sometimes a pasture weed.

ETYMOLOGY

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

pallidus: Pale

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from retail plant and 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.
- 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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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