

Juncus pusillus

COMMON NAME

dwarf rush

SYNONYMS

Juncus capillaceus Hook.f., *Verojuncus pusillus* (Buchenau) Záveská
Drábková & Pročków

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus pusillus Buch.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

NVS CODE

JUNPUS

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. new Zealand: North Island (south of Bay of Plenty), South Island.

HABITAT

Open, swampy ground, in cushion bogs and alongside tarn, lake and river margins. Coastal to alpine. Often associated with *Juncus novae-zelandiae* Hook.f.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



Herbarium specimen: AK 109060.

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Waitutu. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 01/12/1984, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, delicate, red-brown to dark brown, perennial forming widely creeping tufted patches arising from an ascending rhizome 0.5 mm diameter. **Stems** 1–30 × 0.2–0.3 mm, leafy, creeping and rooting below, erect above. Leaves basal and cauline, usually > stems, up to 0.2 mm wide, filiform, striated, terete, septate; sheath membranous with two obtuse auricles. **Inflorescence** terminal, usually solitary flowered, rarely with 2–3 sessile flowers or comprised of two slender branches terminated by 2–3 flowers; subtending bract > inflorescence. **Flowers** 1.5–2.0 mm long, tepals equal, initially pale green, maturing reddish. **Stamens** 6, equal in length or > tepals. **Capsule** pale brown, slightly > tepals, narrowly ovoid, distinctly mucronate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *J. scheuchzerioides* Gaud. (with which it grows on the Auckland Islands) and *J. novae-zelandiae* Hook.f. From *J. scheuchzerioides* it differs by the terete rather than compressed red brown to brown rather than pale green, red-green to bright green leaves which are < rather than > 0.5 mm wide. Further it has flowers which are 1.5–3 rather than 4 mm long. From *J. novae-zelandiae* it differs by the light brown rather than lustrous black tipped mature capsules and stems which are less than the length of the leaves at maturity.

FLOWERING

October–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

FRUITING

December–May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Very small, and best kept in a pot partially submerged in water.

ETYMOLOGY

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

pusillus: Insignificant or weak

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

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 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-pusillus/>