

# Koeleria antarctica

## SYNONYMS

*Aira antarctica* G.Forst., *Avena antarctica* (G.Forst.) Roem. et Schult.,  
*Trisetum saxeticolum* Cockayne et Allan; *Trisetum antarcticum* (G.Forst.)  
Trin.

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Koeleria antarctica* (G.Forst.) Barberá, Quintanar, Soreng et P.M.Peterson

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

TRIAN

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining

2004 | Gradual Decline

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island south from the southern Egmont Coast, on Kapiti Island and western and southern Wellington Coasts to Cape Palliser. In the South Island at Cape Farewell and along the outer Marlborough Sounds and adjacent islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal, on gravel, sand and bluffs.



In cultivation, ex Makara. Dec 2004.  
Photographer: Barbara Mitcalfe, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In cultivation, ex Makara. Dec 2004.  
Photographer: Barbara Mitcalfe, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely tufted, dull green to grey-green grass up to 400 mm tall, with rather rigid leaves usually reaching or sometimes overtopping the dense spike-like panicles. **Branching** extravaginal at plant base, sometimes intravaginal above. **Leaf-sheath** to 40 mm, very minutely pubescent or with extremely minute appressed hairs between ribs. **Ligule** 0.2–0.6 mm, truncate, erose often sparsely minutely ciliate, undersides sometimes minutely prickle-toothed. **Leaf-blade** 35–220 × 1.5–4 mm, flat or inrolled, undersides mostly smooth, often scabrid near the long-narrow tapering apex; upper surface ribbed with sparse to dense minute hairs and prickle-teeth on ribs, hairs slightly longer near ligule; margins minutely prickle-toothed. **Culm** 40–300 mm long, internodes glabrous, occasionally bearing a few minute prickle-teeth below panicle. **Panicle** 20–150 × 6–25 mm, compact, oblong, very dense, rarely with some lower branches and pedicels smooth or with sparse minute prickle-teeth or rarely minute hairs. **Spikelets** 4.5–7.0 mm, greyish green or brownish amber. **Glumes** unequal, hyaline, keel thickened with sparse long prickle-teeth on upper ½; lower  –  length of upper, linear-lanceolate, upper slightly < spikelet, elliptic; margins with prickle-teeth near acuminate to almost mucronate apex. **Lemma** 4.0–6.2 mm, bidentate to shortly bicuspid, papillose, prickle-toothed above and on keel; awn 3.5–6.0, initially straight becoming recurved, insertion in upper ¼ of lemma. **Palea** with minute prickle-teeth on keels and usually on margins. **Callus** hairs to 0.5 mm. **Rachilla hairs** to 2.5 mm. **Lodicules** c. 1 mm, glabrous. **Anthers** 1.0–1.7 mm. **Ovary** 0.8 mm; stigma-styles to 1.3 mm. **Seed** 2.5–3.0 × 0.6 mm.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the nine other indigenous species by the dense, compact, oblong panicle (rarely with spreading lower branches) and by the stiff, rigidly erect, flat grey-green to dull green leaves with the undersides glabrous and the upper minutely, though distinctly scabrid.

## FLOWERING

November–February

## FRUITING

December–May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. An attractive grass for an open spot in well drained soil. Once established rather drought tolerant.

## THREATS

Still quite common in parts of its range but there has been a range contraction around Wellington due to the spread of weeds into its habitat, and also because of greywacke quarrying along the south coast.

## ETYMOLOGY

**koeleria**: Named after George Ludwig Koeler (1765-1807), 18th century German botanist. Author of a work on the grasses of Germany and France, *Descriptio graminum in Gallia et Germania* (1802).

**antarctica**: Antarctic

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/koeleria-antarctica/>