

Lachnagrostis elata

COMMON NAME

wind grass

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Lachnagrostis elata Edgar

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

LACELA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 98$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. In the North Island from Opuatia (Huntly Basin) south to at least Taihape. South Island apparently confined to North West Nelson. Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland forest to subalpine seepages and mires. Usually in tussock grassland or within open, wet depressions in montane forest. When in forest often protruding through divaricating shrubs and sedges. Occasionally forming dense patches on the margins of ephemeral ponds and lagoons.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Grey-green to grass green, slender, tufted perennial grass producing 1-many, somewhat laxly erect to flaccid, semi-scandent culms and lax panicles bearing few branches tipped by few spikelets. Branching extravaginal. **Leaf-sheath** membranous, with few, distinct ribs, very sparsely, finely scabrid throughout or only above. **Ligule** 1.2–8.0 mm long, truncate and erose in lower leaves, tapering in upper leaves, undersides scabrid. **Leaf-blade** 30–250 × 0.4–2.5 mm, flat, or folded and more or less involute, narrow-linear, undersides almost smooth near base to closely scabrid near acute apex, upper surface ribbed and scabrid on ribs, margins scabrid. **Culm** 60–800 mm long, weakly erect to flaccid and hanging in surrounding vegetation, more or less geniculate at base, internodes minutely retrorsely scabrid above. **Panicle** 40–300 × 30–300 mm long, very lax at maturity, usually wider than long, primary branches naked, capillary, finely scabrid, maturing horizontal or reflexed, secondary branches shorter, each tipped by a single spikelet. **Spikelets** 3–8 mm, light green to purplish. **Glumes** more or less equal, elliptic-lanceolate, scabrid above on keel and hyaline margin, apex acute or acuminate. **Lemma** 2.5–3.8 mm, $\frac{3}{4}$ length of glumes, 5-nerved, elliptic-oblong, truncate, denticulate, lateral nerves usually shortly excurrent, margins and nerves finely scabrid near apex, rarely awn absent. **Palea** $\frac{1}{2}$ length of lemma or shorter, keels more or less distinct, 0.2 mm apart, apex shallowly bifid. **Callus hairs** to 1 mm long, to $\frac{1}{3}$ length of lemma. **Rachilla** prolongation 0.1–0.8 mm, bearing a tuft of hairs to 1 mm long; sometimes absent. **Lodicules** 0.6–0.9 mm, linear, acute. **Anthers** 0.6–1.2 mm. **Seed** 1.5–1.8 × 0.5–0.7 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the semi-scandent, flaccid etiolated culms and large, widely spreading, lax panicles bearing few branches, each tipped by 1(–2) spikeletes. Closest to *L. ammobia* Edgar which is a coastal species of sand dunes and beaches, and differs by its smaller size (up to 350 mm tall), and very hairy rather than glabrous or sparsely hairy lemma.

FLOWERING

September–January

FRUITING

November–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Tends to be short-lived, and cultivated plants are rather lanky, and so flop over.

ETYMOLOGY

lachnagrostis: From “lachne” (wool) referring to the distinctive callus hairs of this genus and “agrostis” by which Trinius (1820) actually meant “a grass” (not an Agrostis). So the generic name means “a hairy (woolly) grass” not “a hairy (woolly) Agrostis” as is often incorrectly stated (see Gardner 2014).

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. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lachnagrostis-elata/>