

# Machaerina tenax

## SYNONYMS

Lampocarya tenax Hook.f.; Cladium tenax (Hook.f.) Druce; Baumea tenax (Hook.f.) Blake

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Machaerina tenax (Hook.f.) Koyama

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

MACTEN

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Grass-green, reed-like tufted sedge. Culms narrow, terete, internally septate culms. Inflorescences dark brown to black-brown, spike-like with narrow and pointed apices; inflorescence branches tapered, more or less widely spaced, spikelets clustered. Nut smooth, yellow when mature.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands (but scarce in Northland and much of the eastern South Island).

## HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine. Usually on peat in bogs, around tarns and slow flowing peaty streams. However, *Machaerina tenax* has also been found growing in poorly draining pasture and in rough pasture land in hill country, at the back of estuarine swamps (where it may grow with *M. juncea* and *M. complanata*) and under willow in willow car.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Machaerina tenax culms. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Machaerina tenax flowering inflorescence. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, densely tufted, light-green (grass-green) perennial. **Rhizome** 2–3 mm diameter, with culms closely and evenly spaced along it. **Culms** 0.15–1.65 m tall, 0.5–1.5 mm wide, slender, terete, rigidly pliant and wiry. **Leaves** reduced to basal, reddish pink, sheathing bracts; the uppermost often furnished with a terete lamina like the culm. **Inflorescence** 50–250 mm long, very narrow, spike-like; branchlets remote, slender, erect from sheathing mucronate bracts. **Spikelets** 6–8 mm long, ± distant, not fascicled, light grey-brown or reddish, distinct at the tips of the branchlets, 1-flowered. **Glumes** usually 3, 2 lower glumes ± membranous, lanceolate, shortly acuminate, the uppermost glume longer, spreading with maturation of the fruit. **Nut**, including beak, c. 2.5 × 1.5 mm, yellow, ovoid (trigonus when immature), narrowed below to a short, dark brown stalk, narrowed above to a dark brown, pyramidal beak, c. 1 mm long, rounded at the tip.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Machaerina tenax* is recognised by the grass-green, narrow, terete, internally septate culms; dark brown to black-brown, spike-like inflorescences which narrow toward and are at pointed at the apex; by the more or less approximate spikelet branchlets; and by the yellow, smooth-surfaced nut.

## FLOWERING

December–February

## FRUITING

Fruits present throughout the year

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Can be grown from fresh seed but slow to establish. Resents root disturbance. Plants seem to flourish best if established first in untreated pine saw dust. *Machaerina tenax* is an attractive species that does well when planted in seepages in full sun or around ponds. It prefers a moderately acidic substrate.

## ETYMOLOGY

**tenax**: Tough

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (25 March 2012). Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

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.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/machaerina-tenax/>