

Nitella subtilissima

COMMON NAME

Stonewort

FAMILY

Characeae

AUTHORITY

Nitella subtilissima A. Braun

FLORA CATEGORY

Non-vascular – Native

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small branched submerged plant with easily punctured stems and branches. Distinctive forked branches.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: South Island. Also Australia.

HABITAT

Glacial lakes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Aquatic, submerged, macro-algae. Usually a slender, elongate plant with regular branching. Forked branchlets arise in whorls from central stems, which are anchored in the sediment by colourless rhizoids. Stem and branchlets are comprised of strings of single cells that are easily punctured. Branchlets usually only fork once to occasionally twice. Two terminal cells beyond the last fork include a small conical end cell. Plant is dioecious, and only female plants have been recorded in New Zealand.

SIMILAR TAXA

Has one tier of branchlets in each whorl, rather than two tiers in *Nitella hyalina* and *N. stuartii*. Very similar to *N. pseudoflabellata*, but branches are not so dense or regular, they usually fork only once, and plant is dioecious.

FRUITING

Oogonia occur on slightly contracted whorls, which may be on the upper shoots or distributed lower stems.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Fragments only?

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Casanova, M.T.; de Winton, M.D.; Karol, K.G.; Clayton J.S. (2007). *Nitella hookeri* A. Braun (Characeae, Charophyceae) in New Zealand and Australia: implications for endemism, speciation and biogeography. *Charophytes* (1): 2-18

de Winton, M.D.; Dugdale, A.M.; Clayton, J.S. (2007). An identification key for oospores of the extant charophytes of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*:463-476

Wood RD, Mason R 1977. Characeae of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 15: 87–180.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/nitella-subtilissima/>

