

Poa polyphylla

COMMON NAME

Kermadec Islands poa

SYNONYMS

Poa anceps subsp. *polyphylla* (Hack.) Edgar

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Poa polyphylla Hack.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Raoul and Macauley Islands, Kermadec Islands group.

HABITAT

On coastal cliffs, near seepages or in exposed ground near petrel burrows, also on roadside banks on Raoul Island.




Raoul Island. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.



Raoul Island. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Loosely tufted, widely creeping, perennial with trailing culms up to 0.8 m; culms equalled or overtopped by numerous dull green, leaves and stems drooping from thick stolons, rooting at nodes below tufts; branching extravaginal, with up to three, short, glabrous, obtuse, bract-like sheaths at base; leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** light green to light brown, coriaceous, folded and strongly keeled, lateral ribs conspicuous, smooth, glabrous. **Ligule** 0.5 mm, a truncate usually long-ciliate rim, scabrid abaxially. **Leaf-blade** 65–200 × 1.0–2.5 mm, coriaceous, folded to flat, upper surface densely minutely papillose or glabrous, smooth between inconspicuous ribs, minutely pubescent-scabrid just above ligule, undersides with prominent, thickened midrib, and numerous, distinct lateral ribs, smooth apart from prickle-teeth near tip; margins sparsely ciliate near ligule and scabrid near tip, otherwise thickened, tip acuminate or abruptly acute, pungent, scabrid. **Culm** 70–700 mm, often not far exerted beyond uppermost leaf-sheath, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 35–150 mm, contracted, ± oblong, with few, stiff, erect branches, or slightly more open with finer branches; rachis and primary branches often smooth, secondary branchlets finely, sharply, densely or sparsely scabrid or smooth, often spikelet-bearing ± throughout. **Spikelets** numerous, 4.5–5.5 mm, 3–4-flowered, light green. **Glumes** subequal, narrow- to elliptic-lanceolate, acute to subobtuse, occasionally smooth throughout, or upper  scabrid; lower glume 2.0–3.5 mm, 1–3-nerved, upper glume 2.5–5.0 mm, 3-nerved. **Lemma** 3.0–4.5 mm, 5-nerved, elliptic-oblong, acute or occasionally apiculate, internerves glabrous, midnerve with short crinkled hairs on lower ½ and near base of outer lateral nerves; margins minutely scabrid. **Palea** 2.5–4.0 mm, keels finely scabrid, interkeel and flanks smooth or minutely scabrid. **Callus** with thick tuft of soft crinkled hairs. **Rachilla** c. 0.5 mm, smooth or minutely, sparsely scabrid; prolongation c. twice as long. **Lodicules** c. 0.5 mm, occasionally hair-tipped. **Anthers** c. 1.5 mm. **Seed** 1.5 × 0.5 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Poa anceps* G.Forst. from which it differs by its geographic isolation on the Kermadec Islands; smaller overall size; glabrous leaf-sheath; densely minutely papillose or glabrous adaxial leaf surface; smaller spikelets size range (4.5–5.5 cf. 3.0–7.5 mm); fewer flowers per spikelet (3–4 cf. (2)–3–5–(8)); smaller lower glume size range (2.0–3.5 cf. 2.0–4.5 mm), with the lower glume bearing 5 rather than 3-nerves; 5 rather than 5–7-nerved lemma; and differences from *P. anceps* in the overall DNA content and nrDNA ITS sequence.

FLOWERING

September–January

FRUITING

November–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. A very attractive small grass excellent for wet or dry sites, in full sun or semi-shade. It is moderately cold tolerant.

THREATS

Not threatened. Listed because it is a narrow range endemic to the Kermadec Islands group. It is abundant on Raoul but scarce on Macauley Island.

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (June 2005). 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/poa-polyphylla/>