

Poa pygmaea

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Poa pygmaea Buchanan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

POAPYG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Easily recognised by the diminutive (up to 100 × 25 mm), compact, grey-green, cushion-forming growth habit; culms that scarcely over top the leaves, and panicles with obtuse lemmas whose internerves are glabrous in the upper ½ and sparsely covered with fine, usually crinkled hairs in the lower ½.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Otago (Pisa Range and Mount St Bathans)).

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine in snow hollows and on lake margins



Pisa Range (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, dull grey-green to green, much-branched, very densely packed perennial, rooting from short prostrate branches and forming compact, rigid cushions to 100 × 25 mm high, slightly overtopped by filiform flowering culms with few spikelets. **Branching** intravaginal, new shoots with densely imbricating leaves; leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** much wider than leaf-blade, pale greyish brown, membranous, glabrous, shining, ± indistinctly ribbed. **Ligule** 0.5–1.0 mm, apically glabrous, entire, narrowed centrally to a short point, underside sparsely to densely minutely pubescent. **Leaf-blade** 3–7 × 1–2 mm, stiff, inrolled, underside glabrous, ribs prominent, upper surface strongly ribbed, ribs whitish with fine minute hairs or prickle-teeth; midrib scabrid near very curved, subobtusate or occasionally acute tip. **Culm** 15–25 mm, internodes mainly smooth with a few minute prickle-teeth above. **Panicle** 5–10 mm, contracted, racemose, with 1–3 spikelets; branches and pedicels glabrous. **Spikelets** 4.5–5.5 mm, 2–5-flowered, light green to purplish. **Glumes** equal, 2.5–3.5 mm, 3-nerved, ovate-elliptic, subobtusate, smooth or rarely with a few prickle-teeth on midnerve near tip; margins entire. **Lemma** 3.0–3.5 mm, 5-nerved, ovate, obtuse, lower ½ with fine, often crinkled hairs on nerves and sparse somewhat shorter hairs on internerves, upper ½ sparsely scabrid on midnerve and near wide membranous margin; midnerve occasionally minutely excurrent. **Palea** 2.5–3.0 mm, keels ciliate, interkeel with sparse minute hairs. **Callus** with few long hairs. **Rachilla** 0.5 mm, sparsely ciliate; prolongation twice as long. **Lodicules** 0.4–0.6 mm. **Anthers** 1.2–1.6 mm. **Seeds** c. 1.5–2.0 × 0.5 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

FLOWERING

October–November–(December)

FRUITING

December–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Can be grown from fresh seed and from rooted pieces in an alpine house. Dislikes humidity and drying out.

THREATS

Not Threatened—but known to occupy only small areas within its few known habitats.

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

pygmaea: Tiny

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/poa-pygmaea/>