

Poa senex

COMMON NAME

Old Man poa

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1986)

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Poa senex Edgar

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

POASEN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SP, RR

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Otago and Southland (Pisa Range, Old Man Range, Old Woman Range, Crown Range, Harris Mountains, Eyre Mountains).

HABITAT

.Alpine. On snow banks, in wet depressions, flushes, streamsides and other damp ground within alpine herbfield



DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, tufted, stoloniferous, glabrescent to glabrous, brownish green perennial grass, up to 250 mm tall, culms overtopping leaves; branching extravaginal; leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** membranous, glabrous, ribbed, keeled. **Ligule** 0.5–1.5 mm, entire, tapered, glabrous throughout. **Leaf-blade** 10–35 × 1–2 mm, flat or folded, subcoriaceous, smooth, but midrib scabrid near curved tip; margins finely scabrid. **Culm** 30–200 mm, very slender, erect or geniculate at base, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 10–30, ± open or contracted, with few, ovate spikelets; rachis, branches and pedicels slender with sparse, scattered prickle-teeth. **Spikelets** 2.0–3.5 mm, 2–3-flowered, light green, tinged purple. **Glumes** unequal, submembranous with hyaline margins, a few prickle-teeth on midnerve near tip; lower 1.5–2 mm, 1-nerved, narrow-lanceolate, acute, upper 2.0–2.5 mm, (1)–3-nerved, elliptic-oblong, subobtuse to obtuse. **Lemma** 2.0–2.5 mm, 5-nerved, elliptic-ovate, obtuse, glabrous, but midnerve with short crinkled hairs to c. ½ length and sparsely prickle-toothed near tip, lateral nerves with a few hairs near base. **Palea** 1.5–1.8 mm, keels minutely scabrid, interkeel glabrous. **Callus** with a few wispy hairs. Rachilla c. 0.5 mm, glabrous. **Lodicules** c. 0.1 mm. **Anthers** 0.3–0.4 mm. **Ovary** 0.4–0.5 mm; stigma-styles 0.8–1 mm. **Seeds** c. 1.0 × 0.5 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *P. sublimis* Edgar and *P. incrassata* Petrie, two other species which are diminutive, small-anthered, alpines colonising damp ground. From these species *Poa senex* differs in having hairs on the lemma nerves. From *P. sublimis* it is further distinguished by the more contracted panicle with firmer branchlets, and from *P. incrassata* by the wider leaves, and by the flat, not hooded, lemma tip and glabrous, not papillose, lemma internerves.

FLOWERING

November–December

FRUITING

December–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Can be grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces in an alpine house. Will not flower or thrive in warm or humid climates. Intolerant of drying out.

THREATS

Not Threatened. Listed because it is a Naturally Uncommon, Biologically Sparse, Range Restricted Alpine endemic.

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

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-senex/>