

Poa spania

COMMON NAME

Awahokomo poa

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Poa spania Edgar et Molloy

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (Waitaki Valley, where it is known only from two small < 1 ha (collectively) limestone outcrops).

HABITAT

Confined to limestone tors and castles, where it grows amongst crevices, joints and on the associated rendzina soils.



Poa spania flower head. Photographer: Nick Head, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Growth form of Poa spania. Photographer: Nick Head, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Grey-green or purple-green short-lived perennial grass, forming slender tufts up to 220 mm tall. **Leaves** tough, wiry, < culms; branching mainly extravaginal, leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** pale brown to purple, membranous, distinctly ribbed. **Ligule** 1–1.5 mm, lacerate, ciliate, underside pubescent-scabrid. **Leaf-blade** 60 × 1 mm, folded, midrib underside adorned with sparse prickle-teeth, upper side of leaf covered with minute stiff hairs; margins inrolled. **Culm** to 150 mm, slender, purple, bearing 1–2 cauline leaves, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 20–60 mm, open, sparingly branched; branches usually smooth, bearing 1–2 spikelets at apices. **Spikelets** 2–3 mm, 2–3-flowered, silvery purplish green. **Glumes** subequal, 2–2.5 mm, margins wide, hyaline, lower glume elliptic-lanceolate, acute to acuminate 1–3-nerved, upper ovate, obtuse, 3-nerved. **Lemma** 2–2.4 mm, 5-nerved, ovate, obtuse. **Palea** 2 mm. **Callus** with minute fine hairs. **Anthers** 0.7–1.1 mm purplish. **Stigma-styles** 1–1.4 mm white.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Poa lindsayi* Hook.f. which differs by the intravaginal innovations, shorter, truncate, glabrous ligule, and shorter glumes and anthers.

FLOWERING

November–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple

FRUITING

December–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from division of existing plants. Probably easy from seed if seed can be obtained. Dislikes humidity.

THREATS

Threatened by the very small habitat area it occupies which is subjected to frequent weed invasion by hawkweeds (*Hieraceum* spp.), *Sedum acre* L. and cocksfoot grass (*Dactylis glomerata* L.).

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available. A few plants are held in private gardens.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange. 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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Poa spania* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-spania/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-spania/>