

Puccinellia macquariensis

COMMON NAME

Macquarie Island saltgrass

SYNONYMS

Triodia macquariensis Cheeseman

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Puccinellia macquariensis (Cheeseman) Allan et Jansen

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

PUCMAC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Evaluated

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Macquarie Island.

HABITAT

Mainly coastal where abundant in dense patches on rock stacks and cliffs



Macquarie Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 24/03/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



Macquarie Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 24/03/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial tufts, 40–250 mm, with culms ± hidden by leaf-sheaths and panicles overtopped by the soft, dull green leaves; branching intravaginal. **Leaf-sheath** glabrous, hyaline, whitish green, much wider than leaf-blade. **Ligule** 0.7–1.5 mm, erose. **Leaf-blade** 20–80 × c. 1 mm, flat or folded, sometimes with inrolled margins, glabrous throughout, leaf apex obtuse. **Culm** erect, or geniculate at base, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 15–60 × 0.5–1.0 mm, lanceolate; branches few, short, erect, sharply angled, smooth to sparsely scabrid. **Spikelets** 4–8 mm, 3–5-flowered, pale green, sometimes purplish. **Glumes** ± unequal, elliptic-ovate to elliptic-oblong, obtuse; lower 1.6–2.6 mm. 1–3-nerved, upper 2.0–3.5 mm, 3–5-nerved. **Lemma** 3–4 mm, 5-nerved, elliptic to elliptic-oblong, glabrous or with a few hairs at base and on nerves near base, mid-nerve almost reaching obtuse apex. **Palea** more or less the same as lemma in length, keels conspicuously long-ciliate at midway with shorter prickle-teeth in upper ¼, and glabrous in lower ¼, apex truncate to bifid, keels not excurrent. **Rachilla** 0.7–1.2 mm. **Anthers** 0.4–0.9 mm. **Seed** 1.5–1.7 × 0.6–0.8 mm.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to the grasses of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Endemic to Macquarie Island where it is the only species of *Puccinellia* Parl. present. It is perhaps closest to the *P. walkeri* (Kirk) Allan group from which it differs by the hyaline, whitish rather than firmly membranous, straw-coloured, greyish, greenish-brown or purple leaf-sheath; smooth rather than adaxially scabrid leaf-blade and margins; and by the palea keels conspicuously ciliate at midway rather than node.

FLOWERING

Unknown

FRUITING

Unknown

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Not known from cultivation.

THREATS

This is a Macquarie Island endemic and occurs in the New Zealand Botanical Region but it is not encompassed by the New Zealand threat classification process as Macquarie is under the management of Australia.

Cats, rats, mice and rabbits introduced by sealers in the early 1800s posed a significant threat to species endemic to Macquarie Island and when cats were initially eradicated nearly a century later there was an explosion in rabbit numbers. Further efforts were made to remove rodent pests by the Australian Government and in 2014 Macquarie was declared pest free.

ETYMOLOGY

puccinellia: After the Italian botanist Benedetto Puccinelli (1808 - 1850).

macquariensis: From Macquarie Island

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/puccinellia-macquariensis/>