

Rytidosperma horrens

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Rytidosperma horrens Connor et Molloy

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: RR, St

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | Data Deficient

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (upper Maitland Catchment, Lake Ohau).

HABITAT

Subalpine (1200 m a.s.l.). Recorded from wet flushes and tarn margins where it is a sparse to locally common component of short, dense, vegetation.



Spike. Maitland Saddle, Canterbury.
Photographer: Alice Shanks, Licence: CC BY-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, tufted, bright green tussock with persistent, stramineous leaves below shoots of 3–4 conspicuously divergent leaf blades.

Branching intravaginal. **Leaf-sheath** 10–15 mm, glabrous, ridged, becoming stramineous; collar thickened, paler beneath sheath; apical tuft 0.5–1.5 mm, sparse. **Ligule** a very narrow row of hairs c. 0.25 mm long.

Leaf-blade 25–30 × 0.5 mm, ± terete; persistent, weakly disarticulating at ligule; glabrous below except keel hairy apically; upper surface with numerous small white prickles on nerves; margin glabrous. **Culm** to 120 mm, internodes 40–60 mm. **Inflorescence** racemose of 2–5, widely spaced, solitary, overlapping spikelets on very finely toothed pedicels 2–5 mm long, rachis very finely toothed. **Spikelets** 6–8 mm long, 3–5 florets in each; awns exserted. **Glumes** equal, $j \pm$ ovate-acute 5–6 mm, glabrous, bright green centrally, margins hyaline sometimes tinged purple below, faintly toothed above, apex finely ciliate, nerves confluent; upper 5-nerved, lower 3-nerved, upper surface with abundant small, white hairs. **Lemma** 2 mm, bright green, 7-nerved, nerves anastomosing below sinus; upper row of hairs only in marginal tufts, 0.75 mm, \geq sinus, 0.5 mm, not reaching upper marginal tufts, other glabrous; lemma lobes 1.5–2.5 mm, \geq lemma, abruptly produced into 1.0–1.5 mm long awns, reflexed from twisting column 1 mm. **Callus** 0.25 mm, rounded, marginal hair tufts 0.4–0.5 mm, hairs 1–2 = to lodicule; nerved, cuneate and lobed. **Anthers** 0.7–1.0 mm, yellow, apiculate, exserted. **Ovary** 0.5–0.8 mm, obovoid, stipitate, stigma-style 1.20–1.75 mm, exserted. **Seed** 1.40–1.50 × 0.75 mm, obovate.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Exact relationships to other New Zealand bristle grasses is unclear. It has many of the features of the rather obviously unrelated *R. merum* Connor et Edgar from which it is easily distinguished by its smaller size, and much shorter inflorescences which do not elongate. The lateral lemma lobes are 1.5–2.5 mm rather than 3–8 mm long, the central awn 1.5–2.5 mm rather than 6.5–14 mm, spaced 1 mm rather than 2.5–3.5 mm away from the twisting column.

FLOWERING

January

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Has been cultivated, and flowered and set seed in Auckland and Lincoln. A small and unremarkable grass unlikely to prove popular in cultivation.

THREATS

Recent (2009) surveys have found *Rytidosperma horrens* to be locally common over a large area west of Lake Ohau. In future listings this species is likely to be regarded as Naturally Uncommon.

ETYMOLOGY

rytidosperma: Wrinkled seed

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Molloy and Connor (2005).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Molloy BPJ, Connor HE. 2005. Species novae graminum Novae-Zelandiae III. Two diploid species of *Rytidosperma* (Danthoneae: Danthonioideae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 43: 721–734.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2005.9512986>.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/rytidosperma-horrens/>