

Schoenus apogon

SYNONYMS

Chaetospora imberbis R.Br.; *Schoenus imberbis* (R.Br.) Poir; *Schoenus laxiflorus* Steud.; *Schoenus brownii* Hook.f.; *Schoenus vacillans* Kirk; *Schoenus apogon* var. *laxiflorus* (Steud.) C.B.Clarke

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Schoenus apogon Roem. et Schult.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

SCHAPO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 8

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North and northern South Islands, also Chatham Island. Also in Australia, New Guinea and Japan.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 500 m a.s.l.). Preferring open, seasonally damp or poorly drained ground, usually within gumland, tea tree scrub or within pakihi or on the margins of low moor peat bogs. Sometimes an invasive weed of rough or poorly drained pasture. Rarely on ultramafics.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Waitakere. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Waikumete, Auckland. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely tufted, caespitose sedge. **Culms** numerous, 70–600 × 0.5–1.0 mm, densely packed at base, otherwise rather flaccid, unbranched, glabrous, occasionally finely scabrid just below inflorescence. Leaves 40–200–(600) mm long, usually <, rarely = culm length; yellow green to green, linear to very narrow-linear, acute, channelled, margins slightly scabrid; sheaths membranous, reddish to red-purple. **Panicle** of 2–3 distant, or ± approximate fascicles, the terminal usually with sessile to subsessile, densely clustered spikelets, lower fascicles, stalked, bearing loosely clustered spikelets; bract subtending each fascicle leaf-like, lowest bract overtopping whole inflorescence.

Spikelets 4–6 mm long, 2–4-flowered. **Glumes** dark red, reddish purple to almost black, glossy, rarely pale cream near the slightly scabrid midrib, lower 1–3 glumes usually empty, often mucronate. **Hypogynous bristles** 6, > nut.

Stamens 3. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** slightly < 1.0 × 0.5 mm, white with the 3 angles green or yellow, elliptic-oblong, almost globose, obtuse, apiculate, surface when viewed with a lens, conspicuously cellular, individual cells large.

SIMILAR TAXA

Schoenus caespitans is very similar (and is regarded by some as a mere variety). From *S. caespitans*, *S. apogon* differs by its taller, more openly flaccid growth habit, culms up to 600 × 1 mm, leaves mostly less than, only rarely equal in length to the culms, 2–4-flowered spikelets that are 4–6 mm long (in *S. caespitans* the spikelets are 1–(2)-flowered and 3–5 mm long) and by the reddish glumes which are only rarely cream near the midrib, rather than distinctly, and centrally blotched cream. The surface of the nuts of *S. apogon* has conspicuous rather than distinctly smaller, minute cells.

FLOWERING

August–April

FRUITING

September–June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and fresh seed. An excellent pot plant. Quite tolerant of dry conditions as well as wet. Requires full sun.

ETYMOLOGY

schoenus: Rush

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Both *Schoenus apogon* and *S. caespitans* have the lowest known chromosome number for any indigenous vascular plant.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/schoenus-apogon/>