

Zostera muelleri subsp. novazelandica

COMMON NAME

seagrass, eelgrass, nana, zostera, rimurehia

SYNONYMS

Z. novazelandica Setch., *Zostera muelleri* Irmisch.ex Asch.; *Zostera muelleri* subsp. *novaezelandica* (Setch.) S.W.L.Jacobs orth. var.

FAMILY

Zosteraceae

AUTHORITY

Zostera muelleri subsp. *novozelandica* (Setch.) S.W.L.Jacobs

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 24

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: EF, SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: SO

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. Throughout southern and eastern Australia.

HABITAT

Marine. Mostly submerged in estuaries where it is found on intertidal and subtidal flats of sandy mud. Often in channels or deep pools of water

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



Whangapoua Harbour. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Grass-like plants of mud or sandy-silt shallow marine environments. **Rhizomes** compressed 1–2 mm diameter, widely creeping, rooting at nodes; internodes 10–20 mm long. **Leaf-sheath** 20–40 mm long, becoming fibrous with age, the broad membranous margins inflexed and each terminating in an erect rounded auricle. **Lamina** 50–300 × 1–2 mm; primary nerves 3, interstitial nerves 4–6, cross veins usually at more or less regular, long intervals and mostly all extending from the median to marginal nerve, producing a pattern of distinctive long oblongs. **Erect stems** narrow, flattened, the subfloral peduncular internode 10–60 × 0.6–1.0 mm. **Spathe-like sheath** 15–25 × 2.0–2.5 mm (folded width), its margins squarely truncate at the apex and its terminating lamina 30–80 × 1.5–2.0 mm. **Spadix** often shorter than spathe; retinacula usually 3 on each side, broadly obliquely ovate 1.0–1.5 × 1.0 mm and 2.0–2.5 mm apart. **Stamens and carpels** closely packed, carpels rarely > 6 and anther-sacs about twice their number, all sloping obliquely inwards and upwards. **Achene** elliptic-oblong, 2.5 × 1.0 mm; seed smooth, yellow.

SIMILAR TAXA

None. Plants referred to *Zostera capricorni* in Flora II are merely larger forms of the same subspecies. The type of *Z. capricorni* is Australian and plants matching that type are not found in New Zealand.

FLOWERING

October–February

FRUITING

January–February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in saltwater tanks but otherwise difficult. Plants can be easily propagated through division.

THREATS

Eelgrass communities are declining throughout their range because of widespread siltation and increasingly poor water quality.

ETYMOLOGY

zostera: Girdle or belt

muelleri: Named after Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, 19th century German/Australian botanist and founder of the National Herbarium of Victoria

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

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/zostera-muelleri-subsp-novazelandica/>