



Austroderia turbaria

Common Name(s):

Chatham Island toetoe

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Endangered

Distribution:

Endemic to the Chatham Islands. Found on both Chatham and Pitt Islands.

Habitat:

A species usually found on the margins of slowly flowing streams draining peat bogs, or on lake margins. It has also been found in light wells created by tree falls within swamp forest.

Features*:

Tall, hermaphrodite, tussock of wetlands. Leaf-sheath inter-nerves and margins conspicuously hairy. Ligule 2 mm. Collar underside glabrous, top side sparsely hairy. Leaf-blade up to 1.5 x 0.15 m, glaucous, tapering to long, thin point; under surface with long inter-rib hairs, upper surface with conspicuous, dense, weft of hairs at base otherwise glabrescent; lamina margins scabrid. Culm to 2 m, internodes glabrous. Inflorescences 400-800 mm, dense, plumose, drooping, branches and pedicels covered in copious long hairs, these longer than spikelet. Spikelets with 2 florets. Glumes equal, 25 mm or less, 1-nerved, thin; upper with 10 mm or less hairs, lower less hairy or glabrous. Lemma 9 mm. Palea 7 mm, long-hairy, apex hair-tipped, keels ciliate. Callus hairs 3 mm. Rachilla 1 mm, glabrous. Anthers 1.7-2.6 mm. Gynoecium with ovary to 0.8 mm, stigma-styles 2.5 mm. Seeds ovate, rugose, 3 mm.

Flowering:

October - January

Fruiting:

December - July

Threats:

This plant is one of the most threatened in the Chathams archipelago. As of 2005 there are ten wild populations and 344 mature plants known. These occur in often small and widely fragmented locations and so remain highly vulnerable to catastrophic events. Browsing and trampling by cattle is a major problem, and the species is also greedily devoured wherever sheep and pigs can reach it. There is some indication that fungal diseases such as *Fusarium* wilt may have been responsible for the recent near loss of this species from the northern part of Chatham Island. Fire, floods and competition from other vegetation are also threats. The species is also at some risk through hybridism with species of New Zealand toetoe that have been introduced to the Chatham Islands.

***Attribution:**

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2006. Description adapted from Edgar & Connor (2000).

References and further reading:

Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Whenua Press, Christchurch.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=14



Caption: Adult plant in full flower
Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, February 1996, Harold Pierce Reserve, Waitangi West, Rekohu (Chatham Island)



Caption: In cultivation ex Pitt Island. Oct 2007.
Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe