



Achnatherum petriei

Common Name(s):

Petrie's needle grass

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. South Island only from South Canterbury to Central Otago

Habitat:

Montane to subalpine (up to 1000 m a.s.l.). On dry stony ground and on rock outcrops (especially limestone and schist)

Features*:

Erect, wiry, yellow-green to brownish-grey perennial frequently branching at nodes. Branching extravaginal; cataphylls short. Leaf-sheath to 30 mm, usually glabrous, sometimes retrorsely pubescent. Ligule to 0.5 mm, auriculate, auricular lobes to 1 mm long, symmetrical or asymmetrical, usually finely pubescent. Collar thickened, occasionally with a very small tuft of hairs. Leaf-blade to 300 x 0.8 mm, narrow, involute, rigid, acicular, undersides glabrous, upper surface bearing short, stiff, white hairs. Culm to 600 mm long, wiry, internodes smooth, nodes purple, glabrescent. Panicle to 250 mm long, narrow; rachis smooth below, scabrid above, branches and pedicels scabrid. Glumes \pm equal, to 7 mm long, hyaline, glossy, pink-suffused, produced into an awn-like process up to 0.5 mm long, or split at apex, $<$ awn column; lower 1-nerved, upper 3-nerved. Lemma to 5.0 mm long, cylindrical, 3-5-nerved, margins contiguous, fulvous, clothed in white, \pm appressed hairs; coma to 0.5 mm long, lobes short and inconspicuous; awn to 40 mm long, \pm straight or weakly 1-geniculate, short and stiffly hairy, column loose twisted to 10 mm in length, arista to 30 mm long. Pale = lemma, clothed in long white hairs, apex ciliate, 2-nerved. Callus short (to 0.3 mm long), oblique, hairs white, to 1 mm long. Lodicules 3, one usually emarginate, or entire, 1-nerved, to 1 mm. Anthers to 2.7 mm long, weakly penicillate and shortly caudate. Seed 2.5-3.5 mm; hilum linear.

Flowering:

November - February

Fruiting:

January - May

Threats:

Rather widespread but localised in its occurrences. Probably better qualifies as sparse because this is a naturally biologically sparse species. However, its survival now also depends on effective weed control. In some parts of its range it might be at risk from the spread of wild thyme (*Thymus vulgaris* L.) and stoncrop (*Sedum acre* L.).

*Attribution:

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000)

References and further reading:

Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 pp.

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 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=348



Caption: Awahokomo Bluffs, St Mary, Waitaki

Photographer: G. M. Crowcroft



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