



Chionochloa defracta

Common Name(s):

Red Hills Snow Tussock

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (mineral belt of Nelson and Marlborough).

Habitat:

Upper montane to alpine. An ultramafic endemic which often is the dominant species within grassland. Also in scrub, and open forest or on ultramafic scree

Features*:

Tussocks of variable stature, some robust with long leaves, others slender with shorter, narrow leaves; culm internodes hairy; leaves stiff, scabrid, deciduous. Leaf-sheath to 250 mm, fracturing into short segments, shining light brown at base, long (4 mm) and short deciduous inter-rib hairs above, margin long hairy above, apical tuft of hairs to 4 mm. Ligule to 0.8 mm. Leaf-blade to 750 × 1.3 mm diameter, acicular rush-like, midrib evident, falling with part of sheath, abaxially with long hairs aside midrib below becoming very scabrid above, adaxially with weft of long hairs at base, abundant prickle-teeth and papillae above; margin thick, below with long (up to 4 mm) hairs interlocking across leaf-blade, scabrid above. Culm to 650 mm; lower internodes densely hairy, less so above, hairy below inflorescence. Inflorescence to 200 mm, narrow and strict, very scabrid and with a few long hairs at branch axils and below spikelets. Spikelets of up to 6 lightly purpled florets. Glumes acute or shortly awned, scabrid above, less than or equal to adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 11 mm, 3-nerved, upper to 13 mm, 5-7-nerved. Lemma to 5.5 mm; hairs dense at margin and aside central nerve, often in all internerves or sometimes few or absent, greater than or equal to sinus; lateral lobes to 4.5 mm including awn to 2 mm, or acute, scabrid above; central awn to 11 mm from 2.5 mm twisting column. Palea to 8 mm. Callus to 1 mm, hairs to 4 mm. Rachilla to 1 mm, very occasionally short hairy. Lodicules to 1 mm. Anthers to 3.5 mm. Ovary to 1 mm; stigma-styles to 3.5 mm. Seeds to 3.5 mm

Threats:

Not Threatened. Listed because it is a naturally uncommon, regional endemic.

*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.

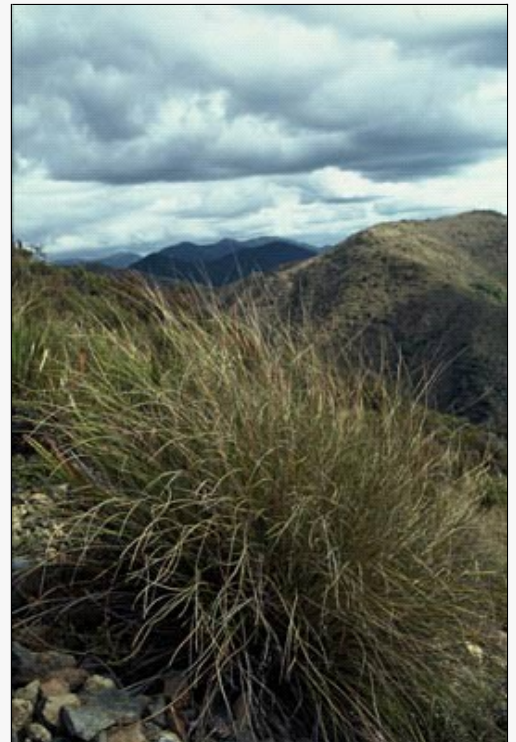
Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11: 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=442



Caption: Red Hills
Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft



Caption: Nr Windy Point, Nelson
Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd