



Aciphylla traversii

Common Name(s):

Chatham Island speargrass, taramea

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Recovering

Distribution:

Endemic to the Chatham Islands where it is known from Chatham Island and Pitt Island. Reported from Mangere Island in 1968 but not seen there since.

Habitat:

Found in open sites on sandy/peaty soils. Probably naturally occurs mainly in bog margins, canopy gaps, lake edges, streamside rock ledges and sites disturbed by seals, seabird activity, storm damage or natural fires. Now mainly associated with moorland created by burning and extensive farming of land formerly clad in tarahinau forest, heath and bamboo rush.

Features*:

This is a stout tussock-like herb up to about 80 cm tall. Leaves are stiff and divided into long narrow sharp-pointed segments. Flower stems up to 1 m tall. Flowers small, in rounded or open clusters and occur from November to February. Male and female flowers on separate plants. Seed clusters (on female plants) are broad and brown when ripe and occur from January to June. The brown seeds are winged. It differs from *Aciphylla dieffenbachii* in possessing dark green semi-rigid less divided leaves, brown seeds and by its distinctive ecology.

Flowering:

November - February

Fruiting:

January - June

Threats:

Domestic stock and feral mammals are prime threats. Rodents probably eat seeds and seedlings; possums probably eat flowers and seedlings. Over-topping by regenerating shrubs and trees presents a threat of shading out the speargrass.

***Attribution:**

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 July 2004. Description adapted from Walls et al (2002).

References and further reading:

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.

Walls, G.; Baird, A.; de Lange, P.J.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2002: Threatened plants of the Chatham Islands. Wellington, Department of Conservation.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=45



Caption: Chatham islands, Ocean Mail

Photographer: John Sawyer



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