



Poa acicularifolia subsp. *acicularifolia*

Common Name(s):

Limestone Cushion Poa

Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: Marlborough, North and Central Canterbury

Habitat:

Montane to subalpine grassland overlying calcareous rocks and soils. Also on limestone bluffs and screes

Features*:

Small, blue-green perennial grass forming diminutive, compact, tight, interlacing mats, 100-150 mm at flowering. Culms far overtopping leaves, arising from a woody, much-branched rhizome, with wiry, very long-creeping roots at nodes and numerous fine rootlets; branching intravaginal; leaf-blades disarticulating at ligule. Leaf-sheath light cream to later greyish brown, much wider than leaf-blade, glabrous, membranous, sparsely ribbed; margins very wide hyaline. Ligule 1-5 mm, apically glabrous, tapered, entire, abaxially scabrid near base or smooth, occasionally extending as a rim-like membranous contra-ligule. Leaf-blade stiff, rigidly cartilaginous, falcate, 5.0-25.0 × c.0.5 mm diameter, involute, glabrous; margins sparsely prickly-toothed, slightly narrowed to firm abruptly shortly curved, sometimes pungent tip. Culm 30-100 mm, with 1-2 small cauline leaves, internodes glabrous. Panicle 15-35 mm, lax; rachis glabrous, branches capillary, smooth or very finely scabrid, with 1-2 spikelets at branchlet tips. Spikelets 4-8 mm, 2-5-flowered, light grey-green. Glumes subequal, 2.0-3.5 mm, 3-nerved, elliptic-ovate, midnerve scabrid near subobtuse tip, margins often finely scabrid. Lemma 3-4 mm, 5-nerved, oblong-elliptic, obtuse, short-pubescent throughout lower 1/3 to 1/2 but central internerves sometimes glabrous, scabrid above on midnerve and occasionally towards tip; margins scabrid above. Palea 2.5-3.5 mm, keels ciliate-scabrid, interkeel minutely hairy on lower 1/2. Callus ringed by short soft hairs. Rachilla 0.5-1 mm, usually ciliate; prolongation twice as long. Lodicules 0.5 mm. Anthers 1.8-3 mm. Seeds c.1.5-2.0 × 0.5 mm.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

November - April

Threats:

Potentially threatened by the spread of hawkweeds (*Hieraceum* spp.) and grasses (such as cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomeratus* L.) onto the limestone habitats it favours. At present there is no documented evidence of decline but careful monitoring is needed at key sites to be sure this grass remains secure. Current observations (which lack hard data) suggest it still exists as stable populations within its main known habitats.

*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.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=629



Caption: Castlehill, December 1994

Photographer: G. M. Crowcroft



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