



Poa acicularifolia subsp. *ophitalis*

Common Name(s):

Ultramafic Cushion Poa

Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (eastern Nelson and western Marlborough).

Habitat:

Subalpine. An ultramafic endemic confined to ultramafic soil and scree

Features*:

Small, tufted blue-green perennial with tufts usually aggregated or with rhizomes interconnecting to form loose mats. Plants 100-200 mm at flowering with 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 5.0-25.0 x c.0.5 mm, involute, erect, firm, rigid, glabrous; margins sparsely prickly-toothed, slightly narrowed to firm abruptly shortly curved, sometimes pungent tip. Culm 30-150 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 subobtusate 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 x 0.5 mm.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

December - March

Threats:

An ultramafic endemic which is naturally restricted to small areas of suitable habitat within the subalpine zone of this rock type. There are currently no known threats to this grass.

*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=630