



Poa chathamica

Common Name(s):

Chatham Islands Poa

Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: Chatham Islands (all main islands).

Habitat:

Coastal and inland. Widespread on sand dunes, within restiad peat bogs, rough pasture, along stream banks, river gorges, on rock outcrops and cliff faces and in boulder falls.

Features*:

Light green, dark green to blue-green, widely creeping drooping perennial grass usually forming dense, leafy swards from long, narrow rhizomes, or stiffly erect tufts to 1 m. Leaves about equal to culms; branching extravaginal near plant base, intravaginal above; leaf-blades long persistent. Leaf-sheath light green to light brown or straw-coloured, coriaceous, distinctly ribbed, smooth to finely scabrid, keeled. Ligule 0.2-1.0 mm, truncate, stiff, rim ciliate, undersides with matted stiff minute hairs. Leaf-blade 50.0-600.0 × 2.5-4.5 mm, folded to flat, or inrolled and c.1 mm diameter, coriaceous, underside smooth, upper surface ribbed, covered with short prickle-teeth and sometimes short stiff hairs; margins ± thickened, smooth to sparsely scabrid, midrib scabrid near straight-sided, pungent tip. Culm 100-900 mm, internodes smooth, densely scabrid below panicle. Panicle 55-120 mm, lax or contracted; branches spreading or erect, sparsely to densely scabrid. Spikelets 6.5-14.5 mm, 2-5-flowered, greyish green to light greenish brown. Glumes subequal, 3-nerved, elliptic-lanceolate, acute to acuminate, often with minute fine hairs near tip, occasionally scabrid throughout, midnerve ciliate-scabrid especially on upper 1/2; lower 4.5-7.5 mm, upper 4.5-8.0 mm; margins ciliate. Lemma 4.5-9.0 mm, 5-nerved, elliptic- to oblong-lanceolate, subobtuse to subacute, scabrid above or occasionally throughout, midnerve with long fine hairs to 1/2 length, lateral nerves hairy near base; margins minutely ciliate. Palea 3.5-7.5 mm, keels rather stiffly ciliate-scabrid, interkeel with sparse minute hairs. Callus with loose web of long fine crinkled hairs. Rachilla 0.5-1.0 mm, glabrous to sparsely minutely pubescent; prolongation twice as long. Lodicules 0.5-2.0 mm, occasionally hair-tipped. Anthers 2.0-3.5 mm. Seed 2.0 × 0.5 mm

Flowering:

September - January

Fructing:

January - February

Threats:

It is threatened by habitat modification, stock grazing and competition from introduced plants such as marram 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. As currently circumscribed *Poa chathamica* is a very variable species.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=636



Caption: Dune form, Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands

Photographer: John Sawyer



Caption: Otauwe, Chatham Island

Photographer: John Sawyer