



Rytidosperma petrosum

Common Name(s):

Cook Strait bristle grass

Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. Cook Strait Region, Kapiti, Stephens and DURville Islands, South Wellington and Wairarapa Coast to Cape Palliser

Habitat:

Predominantly a coastal species, favouring very exposed, dry, sunny, lichen encrusted cliff faces. It dislikes growing in deep soil. Also grows on serpentinite rock near the summit of DURville Island

Features*:

Stiff, wiry and rather dense tufted grass forming small tussocks in rock cracks and amongst saxicolous lichens in sunny sites. Tufts forming at ends of elongating shoots, rooting at nodes; leaves less than or equal to culms, more or less pungent, disarticulating at ligule; branching intravaginal. Leaf-sheath glabrous, light grey to dark brown drying straw-yellow to white; apical tuft of hairs 1-1.5 mm. Ligule c.0.5 mm. Leaf-blade to 150 mm, glabrous, stiff, inrolled margins glabrous. Culms to 400 mm internodes glabrous. Raceme or racemose panicle small, erect, to 40 mm, of very few large spikelets on short pedicels; rachis and pedicels almost glabrous with only a few scattered teeth and usually small tufts of long hairs at branch axils. Spikelets 4-6-flowered, awns and sometimes lemma lobes exerted from glumes. Glumes green, lanceolate, acute, 8.5-15 mm more or less equal; lower 5-(7)-nerved, upper 3-nerved. Lemma 2.5-3.5 mm, 9-nerved, upper row of hairs interrupted, dense marginal tufts with few additional hairs adjacent, hairs very much less than lemma lobes, lower row more or less continuous, with dense strong marginal tufts and less dense tufts between, overlapping upper, glabrous elsewhere; lobes 4.5-8 mm, narrowing to strong awn and often shortly lobed at awn base; central awn 7.5-14 mm, column 2.5-4 mm, less than upper lemma hairs. Callus 0.7-1 mm, strong marginal hair tufts overlapping lower lemma hairs. Rachilla 0.5-0.6 mm. Anthers 0.7-1.5 mm, yellow. Seed 2.5 x 1.0 mm.

Flowering:

(September -) October (-February)

Fruiting:

(November-) January (-July)

Threats:

A local endemic, threatened at some mainland sites on the South Wellington coastline by weeds and quarrying. Locally abundant on some offshore islands (e.g., Kapiti), but as a rule very uncommon

*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=673



Caption: Kapiti Island

Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft



Caption: Cape Palliser

Photographer: Peter de Lange