



Sporadanthus ferrugineus

Common Name(s):

Bamboo Rush, Giant wire rush

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Relict

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Waikato - formerly Kaitaia)

Habitat:

Lowland, oligotrophic, high moor, restiad bogs.

Features*:

Robust, dioecious perennial, 1–6 m high, forming dense rafts. Rhizome 10–15 mm diameter, horizontal, branched. Roots 3–5 × 250–300 mm, white. Culms up to 6 m tall, 10–15 mm diameter, brittle, rigid, upright, terete to subterete, smooth or slightly grooved, glaucous green when young, maturing red-brown or yellow-brown; branched in upper 2/3; branches numerous, slender, firm, flexible, upright; basal 140–200 mm of culm conspicuously swollen with soft, spongy, light brown tissue. Culm base with 3–7 loosely appressed, overlapping scales; scales 10–50 × 15–40 mm, ovate to broadly ovate, coriaceous, light brown to brown, apex rounded and mucronate. Leaves along culm solitary, distant, tightly appressed; lamina 15–50 × 15–50 mm, ovate to broadly ovate, brown to dark brown, fading to grey; basal leaves pectinate, upper leaf margins entire or fractured; apex rounded, mucronate. Inflorescence a terminal panicle up to 150 mm long, red-brown, upright to spreading, sometimes drooping; male inflorescence dense, crowded; female inflorescence sparse, diffuse. Flowers pedicellate to almost sessile. Tepals 6, in 2 whorls of 3, 2.0–3.0 × 0.4–0.5 mm, subulate to lanceolate, light brown to yellow-brown, channelled, apex acute to weakly acuminate, mucronate. Stipe 0.6–0.8 mm long. Male flowers with 3 stamens; filaments 1.8–2.0 mm long, anthers 1.0–1.3 × 0.2–0.4 mm, cream, pollen yellow; pistil rudimentary. Female flowers with 1 pistil; style 0.8–1.3 mm long, pink, papillose on upper surface, decurrent with ovary on lower surface; ovary 0.3–0.7 × 0.2–0.6 mm, ± globose, amber to dark brown, vertical groove on upper surface; staminodes 3, each 0.5–0.8 mm long. Fruit 1.2–1.5 × 0.5–0.7 mm, narrowly ellipsoid, sides dark brown, suture light brown to cream-brown, surmounted by persistent, long style; dehiscing along lower suture. Seed 0.7–0.8 × 0.5–0.6 mm, shortly oblong to broadly ovate, light orange-brown when fresh fading to light brown.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

November - January

Threats:

Threatened in the past by wetland drainage, which eliminated the species from 95% of its known range by 1970. Today confined to Torehape, Kopouatai and Moanatuatua. Of these Moanatuatua is no longer a truly viable, functioning system and Torehape is being restored, but only Kopouatai truly preserves the *Sporadanthus* dominated raised bog ecosystem intact. All three populations remain highly vulnerable to fire - itself an issue as there is good evidence that fires are necessary to maintain the species but it is also clear that excessive burning will eliminate it.

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 18 January 2005. Description adapted from de Lange et al. (1999).

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Clarkson, B.D.; Clarkson, B.R. 1999: Taxonomy, ecology, and conservation of *Sporadanthus* (Restionaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 37: 413–431

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=688



Caption: *Sporadanthus ferrugineus* (inflorescence)

Photographer: Wayne Bennett



Caption: *Sporadanthus ferrugineus* at Torehape

Photographer: Wayne Bennett