



Chara australis

Common Name(s):

Stonewort

Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South Island. Also Australia.

Habitat:

Lakes and slow flowing waters.

Features:

Aquatic, submerged, macro-algae. Often a tall (0.3-0.5 m), stiff plant, which is easily crushed. Simple, not forked branchlets arise in whorls from central stems, which are anchored in the sediment by colourless rhizoids. Stem and branchlets are comprised of strings of large single cells that are easily punctured. Small accessory cells at junctions between branchlet cells are not obvious. Plant is dioecious, with large orange antheridia and pale oogonia on separate plants and with fruiting bodies dispersed over the upper stem portions. The plant is particularly conspicuous when orange, male fruiting bodies (antheridia) are abundant.

Fruiting:

Produces large (>500µm long) black oospores that are round in transverse section. Oospore has 5-6 sinistral spiralling ridges.

References and further reading:

Broady, P.A.; Flint, E.A.; Nelson, W.A.; Cassie Cooper, V.; de Winton, M.D.; Novis P.M. Chapter 23 Twenty – Three :Phyla Chlorophyta and Charophyta (Green Algae). In: New Zealand Inventory of Biodiversity (Volume 3), Gordon, D.P. (Ed), Canterbury University Press, 616pp.

Casanova, M.T.; de Winton, M.D.; Karol, K.G.; Clayton J.S. (2007). *Nitella hookeri* A. Braun (Characeae, Charophyceae) in New Zealand and Australia: implications for endemism, speciation and biogeography. *Charophytes* (1): 2-18

de Winton, M.D.; Dugdale, A.M.; Clayton, J.S. (2007). An identification key for oospores of the extant charophytes of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*:463-476

Wood RD, Mason R 1977. Characeae of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 15: 87–180.

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http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=7558