

Puna grass

Achnatherum caudatum

Family Poaceae (grass family)



Identification

- **Tall** tussock forming grass with flower spikes to **1m** tall.
- **Leaves** flat or rolled, to **50cm** long x **3mm** wide
- **Leaves** have obvious **ribs** on the top and bottom, and fine prickles on top
- **Leaf margins** have **straggling hairs** to **1.5mm** and **prickle teeth**
- The **margins** of the **leaf sheath** (the part of the leaf that encloses the stem) have long hairs towards the top
- **Tufts of hairs** to **2mm** at the top of the leaf sheath (where the leaf blade leaves the stem - see photo)
- The **ligule** (the membrane on the inside of the leaf at the point where the blade leaves the stem) is **fringed with hairs**.
- **Flowers** are **purplish-brown** with **1-2cm long bristles** at the tips (similar to nassella tussock - see photo)
- **Fibrous** root system



A group of puna grass flowers

Why is it a problem?

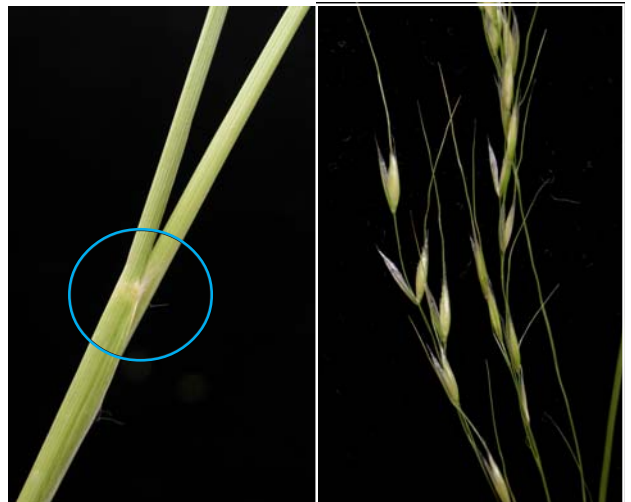
Puna grass is a weed of grasslands and riparian vegetation, as well as of waste areas and roadsides. In Australia it is considered to be similar in threat-potential to nassella tussock. Puna grass is not particularly palatable to stock, is spread by seed and is difficult to control once established.

Where is it found?

The only current known location in New Zealand is at Bingley, near Amberley

Status

Puna grass currently has no formal pest status. Environment Canterbury is controlling this grass at the only known location in Canterbury. Please **report** any possible sightings to weeds@ecan.govt.nz or phone the Potential Pest Line on (03) 363 9380



Circled area shows the tufts of hair which can be found where the leaf blade leaves the stem.

Puna grass flowers