

Lepidosperma tortuosum



Lepidosperma tortuosum.
Tasmanian Herbarium specimen.

FAMILY: CYPERACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Lepidosperma tortuosum*, F.Muell., *Fragm.* 9: 23 (1875)

COMMON NAME: Twisting rapier sedge

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

A slender, tufted plant with a short rhizome (underground stem). **Stems:** The stems are up to 25 cm tall and 0.6-1.25 mm wide. They are wavy and usually have a furrow on one side. **Leaves:** The blades are sickle-shaped, occasionally spirally twisted and up to 16 cm long and 0.6-1.3 mm wide. The margins are covered in tiny rough hairs. **Seedhead:** The flowerheads consist of a 2-4 flowered spike with a wavy stem, and bracts (leaf-like structures associated with the inflorescence) that are shorter than the spike. **Spikelets (units of the seedhead):** The spikelets are between 6.5-8.5 mm long and often curved. The bracts are shorter than the lowest glume (leaf-like structure surrounding spikelet). The lower glumes are shallowly notched at the tip and pointed. The upper glumes are progressively longer. There is usually one fertile bisexual floret and one or two male sterile florets. Flowering is from spring to summer (Flora of Victoria). **Seed (nut):** The fruit is a nut that is approximately 4.5 mm long (description from Curtis & Morris 1994). Herbarium specimens have been collected through most of the year.

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. In Tasmania, *Lepidosperma tortuosum* is usually found in open heathland and eucalypt woodland in the south-east, on the East Coast and in the north-east near sea level to approximately 460 metres altitude (Curtis & Morris 1994).

Key Sites and Populations

Key sites include Elephant Pass Road near St. Marys, North of Coles Bay, near old tin mines, Brickfields on Huon Road in Hobart, Longley, Blackmans Bay, Apsley Marshes, South of Maranoa Heights in Kingston, Electrona, near Rattrays Marsh, Cusicks Hill, the Spinning Gum Forest Reserve, Colebrook and Hungry Flats.

Known Reserves

Reserved in the Doctors Peak Forest Reserve, Freycinet National Park, Hardings Falls Forest Reserve, Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve, Rocky Cape National Park, Spinning Gum Conservation Area and Wye River State Reserve.

Ecology and Management

This species can reproduce vegetatively by suckering, particularly after fire and mechanical damage. Without fire, the canopy can increase and can be detrimental to *Lepidosperma tortuosum*. Forest clearance and domestic grazing have been cited as adverse impacts (TPLUC 1996).

Wind is the most likely pollination vector for this species (A. Hingston pers. comm.).

Conservation Status Assessment

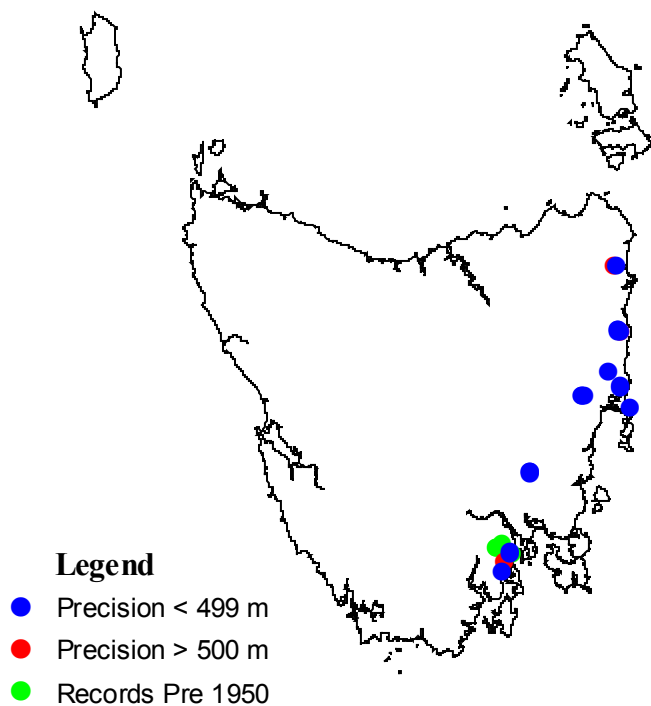
There is not enough information available to enable meaningful reassessment of *Lepidosperma tortuosum*.

Further Information

- Curtis, WM & Morris, DI 1994, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 4B, Printing Authority of Tasmania, Hobart.
- Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1996, *Environment & Heritage Report Vol IV, Background Report*, Part C, Tasmanian Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, June 2003)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Blackmans Bay, Blue Tier, Colebrook, Coles Bay, Cygnet, Henry, Ironhouse, Leake, Lodi, Longley, St John, St Marys, Tarroona.

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