

Austrostipa scabra



Austrostipa scabra.
Tasmanian Herbarium specimen.

FAMILY: POACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Austrostipa scabra*,
(Lindley) S.W.L.Jacobs & J.Everett, *Telopea*
6(4): 588 (1996)

COMMON NAME: Rough spear grass

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

A tufted, perennial grass up to 50 cm tall. **Stem:** The stem is circular and hairless, however there may be a band of rough hairs below the nodes (stem joints). **Leaves:** The blades are up to 18 cm long, longitudinally inrolled and bristly. The sheaths surrounding the base of the leaves are ribbed and hairless or covered in small hairs or bristles – the upper leaf sheaths are hairless. **Seedhead (panicle):** The panicle is up to 25 cm long and approximately 3 cm wide. The branches are erect, fine and covered in tiny rough hairs. **Spikelets (units of the seedhead):** The spikelets are purplish at first, becoming straw coloured at maturity. The leaf-like structures surrounding the spikelets (glumes) are unequal in length, with the lower glume being longer than the upper glume. **Seed cover (lemma):** The seed cover is honey brown in colour, smooth and silky on the lower part with 0.2-0.5 mm whitish hairs. It is naked and rough towards the top. The awn (long hair-like structure protruding from the seed cover) is around 40-80 mm long. This species flowers in spring (description from Curtis & Morris 1994). **This species was previously known as *Stipa scabra* and *Austrostipa scabra* now includes *Stipa falcata* (*sensu* Townrow 1978). Two subspecies have been described, *Austrostipa scabra* subsp. *falcata* and *Austrostipa scabra* subsp. *scabra* (Jacobs & Everett 1996) both of which are currently protected under the threatened species legislation.**

Distribution and Habitat

This *Austrostipa* species is found in all Australian States. In Tasmania it occurs in dry, open habitats along the East Coast and the south and central Midlands. This species has also been recorded from grassy remnants, roadside banks and coastal vegetation (Curtis & Morris 1994, Tasmanian Herbarium data 2002).

Key Sites and Populations

Populations occur at Bridgewater, St. Peters Pass, Tunbridge, Ross, Orford and other regions of the East Coast. An estimate of population number lies between 10-20, with the number of individuals around 1000 or greater. The species is found over an 80 kilometre geographical range (TPLUC 1996).

Known Reserves

This species is not currently known from any reserve.

Ecology and Management

Austrostipa scabra requires disturbance. A major threat to this species is habitat loss through land clearance (TPLUC 1996).

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

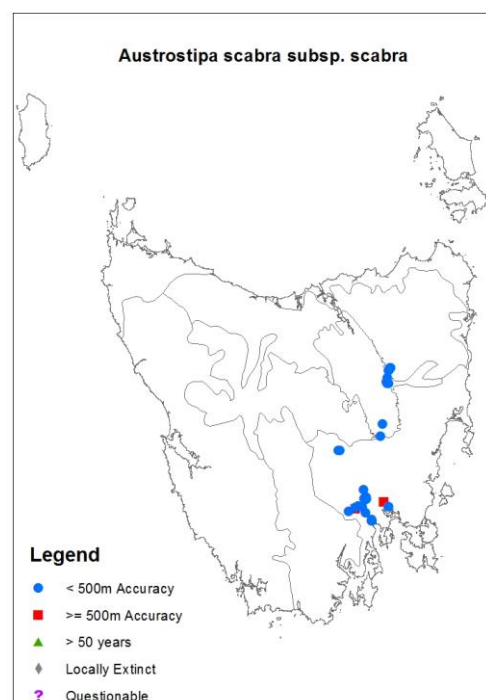
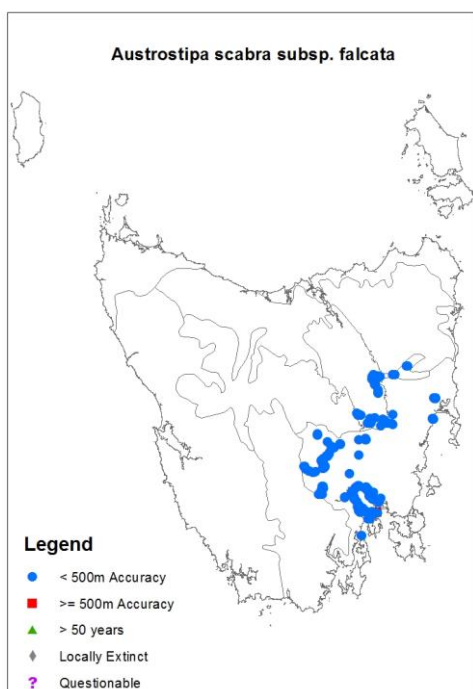
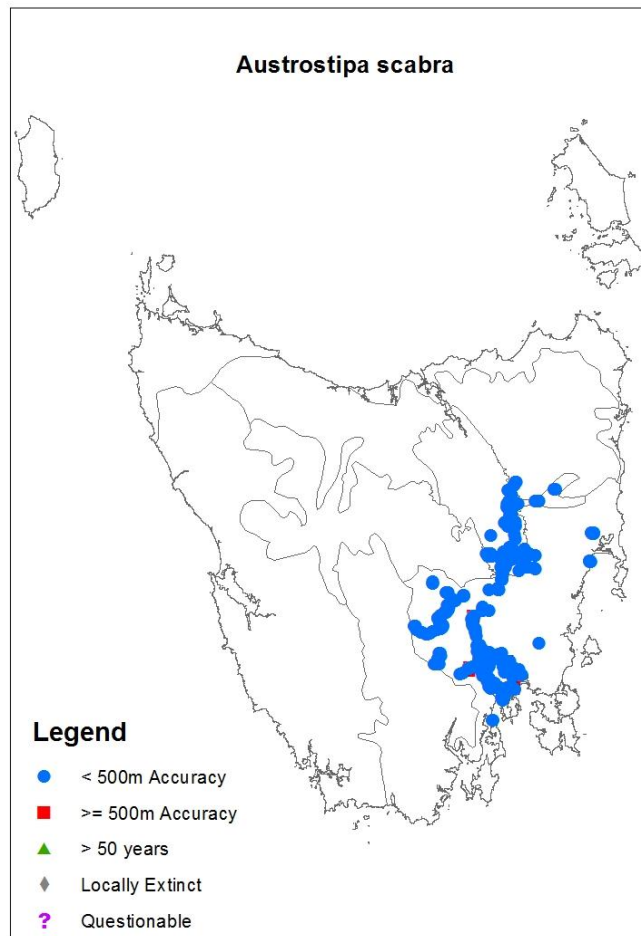
Conservation Status Assessment

Due to its widespread distribution and large number of populations and individuals resulting from new observations since the time of listing, *Austrostipa scabra* warrants consideration for delisting from schedules of the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. Two subspecies of *Austrostipa scabra* have been recognised in Tasmania, *Austrostipa scabra* subsp. *falcata* and *Austrostipa scabra* subsp. *scabra*, though a meaningful assessment of the conservation status of either subspecies may not be possible given confusion as to whether one or both subspecies occur in Tasmania and difficulty in identifying Tasmanian specimens to subspecies level.

Further Information

- Curtis, WM & Morris, DI 1994, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 4B, Printing Authority of Tasmania, Hobart.
- Jacobs, SWL & Everett, J 1996, *Austrostipa*, a new genus, and new names for Australasian species formerly included in *Stipa* (Gramineae). *Telopea* 6(4): 579–595.
- Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1996, *Environment & Heritage Report Vol IV, Background Report*, Part C, Tasmanian Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution (showing IBRA bioregions)
(As per Threatened Species Section records, May 2015)



Date last modified: 22/9/2015

View

<http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/threatenedspecieslists>

Contact details

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Permit

It is an offence to collect, disturb, damage or destroy this species unless under permit.