

## SCIRPUS

**Description:** Tufted or rhizomatous perennials. **Culms** several-noded, leafy. **Leaves** both basal and cauline, blades well-developed; ligule usually present. **Inflorescence** compound, much-branched, with many scabrous branches and numerous spikelets (solitary or clustered); involucre bracts several, leafy. **Spikelets** numerous-flowered, terete. **Glumes** spirally arranged.

**Hypogynous bristles** 6 [or fewer, weak and filiform, 2-3 times as long as the nut but at maturity strongly crisped or contorted, sparsely and minutely antrorsely scabrous at least distally [or completely smooth]. **Stamens** 3 [or fewer]. **Style** 3- [or 2-] fid. **Nut** trigonous.

**Distribution and occurrence:** World: c. 20 species, mainly cold temperate Northern Hemisphere, especially North America, Asia. Australia: 2 species (1 species endemic, 1 species naturalized), Qld, N.S.W., Vic.

### *Scirpus polystachyus*, Large-headed Club-rush

**Description:** Robust tufted perennial, with short, stout rhizome. Culms terete to trigonous, erect, smooth, 50-200 cm long, 2.5-5 mm diam. Leaves shorter than culms, to 7 mm wide; sheaths green to yellow-brown, persistent as fibrous remains; ligule mostly present on basal leaves. Inflorescence oblong to ovate in outline, (6-)10-30 cm long, with slender drooping branches. Spikelets 6-9 mm long. Glumes obtuse to acute, occasionally shortly mucronate, glabrous, dark green-grey with prominent green midrib, c. 2.5 mm long. Anthers 1.2-1.7 mm long, excluding appendage to 0.1 mm long. Nut ellipsoid to obovoid, plano-convex or with a distinct dorsal angle, 1.2-1.5 mm long, 0.6-0.8 mm diam., +/- glistening, punctulate, pale yellow-brown.

**Flowering:** summer.

**Distribution and occurrence:** Grows in creeks and in swampy areas on higher tablelands, extending to higher coastal ranges. NSW subdivisions: NC, SC, NT, CT, ST. Other Australian states: Qld Vic.



*Scirpus polystachyus*



*Scirpus polystachyus* Photo J. R. Hosking ©The Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust



*Scirpus polystachyus* Fagg, M. 2009, Ballalaba TSR between Captains Flat and Braidwood, NSW, [APII dig.8514](#)