

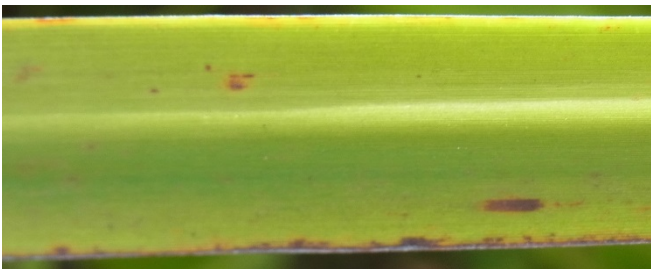
# Peppy Plants July 2013

by Eleanor Bennett

So far none of the sedges that grow along the coastal areas have been featured in Peppy Plants. One of the common sedges is *Lepidosperma gladiatum*, commonly known as Coast Sword-sedge (see also [Lepidosperma gladiatum](#)). *Lepidosperma* is derived from the Greek, **lepis** meaning scale and **sperma** a seed which refers to the scales, just visible to the naked eye that surround the seed, and *gladiatum* from the Latin **gladius** meaning a sword. It is a tufted, perennial sedge up to 3m tall typically forming large tussocks. The stems are flattened up to 2cm wide the centre of the stem raised and convex on both sides. The leaves are similar to the stem, not as wide and not obviously convex. The margins of the stems and leaves are sharp and if not careful can cut you, hence the common name of Sword-sedge. The inflorescences are large up to 15cm long and typically much branched. The spikelet (the flower of an inflorescence) is pale to dark brown and up to 1cm long with 1 bisexual flower and 1-3 male flowers. The seed is up to 3mm long and can be visible when the inflorescence is in fruit. *Lepidosperma gladiatum* occurs in sandy soils, often in coastal dunes and extends south from Jurien to Cape Arid and extends into South Australia, through Victoria, into New South Wales and also to Tasmania. It flowers in spring and summer.



A group of young *Lepidosperma gladiatum* plants



*Lepidosperma gladiatum* stem illustrating the raised (convex) area along its length



*Lepidosperma gladiatum* leaf is flat



The inflorescence on the left hand side illustrates the 3-branched style of the bisexual flower and on the right hand side the stamens of the male flowers. The reason the stigms and stamens are exerted beyond the inflorescence is because they are wind pollinated and this ensures the pollen is transferred onto the stigma.



As the seeds mature the heads become a darker brown and each spikelet becomes swollen at the base.