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Poa labillardierei

TALL TUSSOCK GRASS is a perennial grass. Native to Australia and New Zealand it has purple-tinged, green flower spikelets.

It is also known as Common tussock grass, and Tussock grass.

Labillardierei commemorates a French naturalist, physician and explorer especially associated with Australasian flora, Julien J.H. de la Billardière (1755-1834). After graduating he travelled in Europe (England, the Alps, Corsica, Sardinia, Cyprus Crete, Syria and Mount Lebanon) studying plants. He then became a member of Bruny d'Entrecasteaux's 1792-1793 expedition to search for La Pérouse (1741-1788) (see *Chorizema*) among the central and southern islands of the Pacific Ocean, and Australia. During this voyage he collected, in Australia and Tasmania especially, geological, animal, fish, bird and plant specimens (over 4000 of the latter), as well as noting the landscape and the language and customs of the peoples of the countries the expedition visited. When eventually he returned to France, having spent 18 months to March 1795 in jail in Dutch Java for his republican views, he discovered that the English had confiscated his specimens as trophies of war. The majority of these were new species and with the aid of the French government he recovered them, not least because Sir Joseph Banks (under whom he had once studied) supported the French claim for them. His collections can be seen today in the Institute and Museum of the History of Science in Florence. La Billardière was a member of the French Academy of Sciences and, as a person, is described by several authorities as being arrogant and independent but his contribution to botany is widely acclaimed. Among his many published many works including *Icones Plantarum Syriae Rariorum Descriptionibus et Observationibus Illustratae*, *Nova Hollandiae Plantarum Specimen*, and *Relation du Voyage à la Recherche de La Pérouse*.

In Australia this grass is cultivated as an ornamental on wet sites.