

Carex auceps

COMMON NAME

Chatham Island bastard grass

SYNONYMS

Uncinia auceps de Lange et Heenan

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex auceps (de Lange et Heenan) K.A.Ford et Heenan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 88$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: IE, PD

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: IE, PD

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Tufted, tussock-forming, leafy sedge. Fruiting stems when mature, greatly elongated, drooping and long trailing. Inflorescences in many-flowered spikes, mature fruits hooked, basal portion obscured by dark brown scales.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Chatham Islands (Rekohu, Rangiauria, Rangatira).

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland forest.



Tuku Nature Reserve, Chatham Island. Jun 2009. Photographer: Peter B. Heenan, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Nikau Bush, Chatham Island. Jun 2009. Photographer: Peter B. Heenan, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Large, caespitose plants, with shortly spreading, erect rhizomes. **Mature culms** (0.8)–1.2–2.0 m long, (0.6)–0.8–1.0 mm wide, glabrous, trigonous, greatly exceeding leaves, trailing; leaf sheaths up to 60 mm long, dark brown, prominently and deeply nerved, nerves concolorous with sheath. **Leaves** 4–12 per culm, 0.48–83 m long, 4.3–6.2 mm wide, deeply channelled, upright to spreading, curved, dark green; adaxial surface scabrid in distal portion, otherwise glabrous; abaxial surface keeled, keel \pm scabrid, often diffusely so, sometimes nearly glabrous, rest of surface glabrous margin scabrid, apex acute, trigonous, scabrid. **Spikes** 90–400 mm long, 3–6 mm wide, linear, often curved and twisted; female florets proximal, 80–420 per spike; internodes up to 7 mm long at base, decreasing to 0.4 mm long (or sometimes less) above; male florets distal, 60–100 or more, imbricate. **Spike** sometimes subtended by a foliose bract; bract 90–112 mm long, 0.2–1.2 mm wide, capillary, channeled, margins and abaxial midrib scabrid, apex trigonous. **Glumes** persistent. **Male glumes**, imbricate, 3.0–5.1 mm long, 1.0–1.8 mm wide, lanceolate, elliptic-lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, dark to light lustrous brown at maturity, midrib prominent, stramineous, with 1 central nerve, apex acute, margins membranous, entire, apices sometimes scabrid to \pm lacerate. **Filaments** 3.6–5.0 mm long, pale brown; anthers, 1.2–1.8 mm long, yellow. **Female glumes** 3.4–5.3 mm long, 1.0–2.0 mm wide, \pm equal in length to utricles, elliptic-lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, dark to light lustrous brown at maturity, midrib prominent, with 1 central nerve, usually concolorous with rest of glume, sometimes stramineous, especially at distal portion of spike, apex acute to subacute, margins membranous, entire; lowest 1–2 glumes sometimes bearing foliose, slender (almost capillary), filiform awns up to 60 mm long, these mostly entire except for scabrid upper abaxial midrib and apex, apex trigonous. **Utricles** scarcely spreading when ripe, 4.8–5.3 mm long, 1.2–1.4 mm wide, plano-convex to convex, ovoid, glabrous, lustrous brown to dark brown, lateral nerves \pm prominent, though not conspicuous, stipe and beak narrow, each 1.0–1.5 mm long; rachilla 7.0–9.2 mm long. **Nuts** 2.2–2.4 mm long, 1.0–1.2 mm wide, ovoid, light grey to silvery grey, papillate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex auceps is allied to *C. uncinata* from which it differs by the greater number of female flowers (up to 400 cf. 120 in *C. uncinata*), by the persistent glumes persistent, which are equal to or greater in length than utricles, and lastly by the mature fruiting culms which are drooping, and trailing along the ground sometimes up to 2 m from the plant.

FLOWERING

August–October

FRUITING

January–November

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed.

THREATS

Although widespread and common in forested areas on the main islands of the Chatham group, the species is only secure within reserved areas. Outside reserves, as forest remnants degrade conditions for the *Carex auceps* become suboptimal and if this continues then overtime *Carex auceps* will become less common. Already this is happening in the northern part of Rekohu (Chatham Island) and over much of Rangiauria (Pitt Island). It is for this reason that *Carex auceps* has been listed as Declining.

ETYMOLOGY

carex: Latin name for a species of sedge, now applied to the whole group.

auceps: Derived from the Latin noun for a ‘bird catcher’

ATTRIBUTION

P.J. de Lange (14 August 2013). Description from de Lange et al. (2013).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange PJ, Heenan PB, Rolfe JR. 2013. *Uncinia auceps*(Cyperaceae): a new endemic hooked sedge for the Chatham Islands. Phytotaxa 104 (1): 12–20. doi: 10.11646/phytotaxa.104.12

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Carex auceps* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-auceps/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-auceps/>