

Carex cockayneana

COMMON NAME

Cockayne's sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex cinnamomea Cheeseman, *C. forsteri* var. *cockayniana* (Kük.) Kük.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex cockayneana Kük.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARCOC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.60-66

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (uncommon, near Wellington), South Island (scattered mainly in the west)

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine. Usually along stream sides in montane forest or in subalpine scrub. Sometimes extending into tall tussock grassland where it grows around seepages, springs or tarns.



Herbarium specimen: AK 71719. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Culms 150–600 × 1–2 mm, smooth, trigonous, often drooping; basal sheaths dark red-brown. **Leaves** > culms, up to 800 × 3.0–6.5 mm. wide, double-folded, margins of upper half sharply scabrid. **Inflorescence** of 2–8 ± distant, red-brown or light brown spikes, the upper sessile, the lower drooping on filiform peduncles; terminal 1–(2) spikes entirely male or with few to numerous female flowers at the top, remaining spikes female with a few ± distant male flowers at the base, 10–70 × 5–10 mm. **Glumes** (excluding awn) ± = or slightly > utricles, ovate-lanceolate, acute and entire or slightly emarginate, membranous, light red-brown with a thickened green midrib produced to a slightly scabrid awn 1–2 mm long. **Utricles** 3–4 × c. 1 mm, unequally biconvex, fusiform, conspicuously costate when immature, turgid, smooth and slightly spreading when mature, yellowish brown, margins glabrous; beak narrow, 0.5–1.0 mm long, very shortly bifid, orifice slightly scabrid; stipe < 0.5 mm long. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1.5–2.0 mm long, trigonous, obovoid-ellipsoid, dark brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Somewhat similar to *Carex spinirostris* Colenso which is a more northerly species of offshore islands (especially around petrel burrows), coastal and lowland forest. *Carex cockayneana* differs from that species by the stouter, light red-brown or yellow-brown spikes. *Carex cockayneana* could be confused with *C. forsteri* Wahl. as both grow in similar habitats (though *C. forsteri* is more common at lower elevations) and both have greenish spikes. From *C. forsteri*, *C. cockayneana* differs by the utricles which are shorter, smooth (rather than nerved) and have a shorter beak and straight rather than oblique mouth.

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–May

LIFE CYCLE

Nuts surrounded by inflated utricles are dispersed by granivory and wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. Best grown in a permanently damp situation in a shaded site but will tolerate full sun and dry conditions once established. An excellent plant for growing along shaded stream sides.

ETYMOLOGY

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

cockayneana: Named after Leonard Cockayne FRS (7 April 1855 - 8 July 1934) who is regarded as New Zealand's greatest botanist and a founder of modern science in New Zealand

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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