

Carex impexa

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex impexa K.A.Ford

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CAREMP

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 66

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, North West Nelson, Kahurangi National Park from the Goulard Downs and Pikipiruna Range south to the Matiri Range.

HABITAT

A species of forested or tussock-grassland, rupestral communities overlying weakly weathered limestone, marble and calcareous mudstone/siltstone. In these sites *Carex impexa* is found beneath cliffs, on ledges, debris slopes, boulder field and around sinkholes in sites from 630–1400 m.a.s.l.



In cultivation ex Matiri Plateau. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation ex Matiri Plateau. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted, stiffly spreading; shortly rhizomatous, bronze-green, green, brown-green, red-green to red sedge of calcareous substrates. **Rhizomes** up to 35 mm; 1–1.36 mm diameter, covered by brown striated bracts. **Culms** 14–900 × 1–1.6 mm diameter, ascending to spreading. **Leaf-sheaths** loose, dull brown, shredding with age. **Leaves** 45–260 × 1.5–3.6 mm, equal to or greater than, or less than culms, channelled, stiff, recurved, margins and keel red, thickened, scabrid; apex scabrid, trigonous, acuminate. **Inflorescence** of 3–5, brown, erect, mostly sessile, congested spikes. **Spikes:** terminal spike male 7–12 mm long; remaining spikes female, 6–10 mm long. **Glumes** 1.8–2.4 mm, < utricles, brown, ovate-rotund, concavo-convex, subcoriaceous, 3-veined, green maturing brown; margins membranous, mostly entire, becoming lacerate with age, awned or not. **Stamens** 3. **Utricles** 2–2.7 × 1–1.4 mm, subtrigonous, broad-elliptic to obovate, brown to dark-brown, smooth, beakless or with short beak, if beaked, then orifice shallowly bifid or entire, crura short. margins below beak sometimes scabrid. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** brown, trigonous.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Carex dallii* Kirk and *C. dissita* Sol. ex Boott. It differs from *C. dallii* and *C. dissita* in having a congested inflorescence. In *C. dallii* the 3–5 spikes are approximate with typically the lower one distant, while those of *C. dissita* are spaced at increasingly longer intervals down the inflorescence. Specifically from *C. dallii*, *C. impexa* differs by its broad (1.5–3.6 cf 1–1.6 mm) leaves which are stiff, recurved, green to red-brown, bronze-green (or rarely red) rather than laxly recurved and uniformly red. In *C. impexa* the basal sheaths are dull brown rather than light brown to reddish. The utricles of *C. dallii* are narrow-ovoid to almost oblong, dark red-brown and shortly beaked, while in *C. impexa* they are broad-elliptic to obovate, brown to dark brown, beakless to scarcely beaked. In *C. impexa* the female glumes are ovate to rotund, brown, while *C. dallii* glumes are ovate, and red-brown coloured.

FLOWERING

November

FRUITING

January–March

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Does best in full sun, in a pot, in free draining soil enriched with lime. It does not like humid climates. Tends to be rather short-lived, and needs frequent repotting to maintain.

THREATS

A sparsely distributed, naturally uncommon species of calcareous substrates which does not appear to be under any obvious threats. *Carex impexa* is uncommon but still present on the Canaan Downs and Takaka Hill portion of the Pikikiruna Range but it is there where it does seem to have declined. Elsewhere it seems secure for the time being.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (31 May 2005). Description based on Ford (1998)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Ford KA. 1998. *Carex impexa* (Cyperaceae), a newly described sedge from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 36(4): 587–592. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1998.9512596>.

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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