

Carex uncifolia

COMMON NAME

sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex cardrona Hamlin

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex uncifolia Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARUNC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.60$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR, St, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR, Sp, St

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR, St, Sp

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island known only from the Central Volcanic Plateau from Mt Hauhangatahi and in the nearby Moawhango. In the South Island much more widespread known from the Red Hills, between the Wairau Valley and Nelson, south through Canterbury to Central Otago.

HABITAT

A species of damp seepages, open wetlands and damp turf within tussock grassland. Also abundant in damp sites overlying ultramafic rocks.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/02/2009, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/02/2009, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shortly rhizomatous, dark purple red to beetroot red, densely tufted sedge 30–70 mm tall. **Culms** completely obscured by light grey-brown, chartaceous, somewhat fibrillose leaf-sheaths. **Leaves** 0.5 mm wide, dark purple-red, maroon red to beetroot red, much > culms, plano-convex, nerved on the undersides, smooth on the upper surface, margins scabrid, apex subobtusate, often curled. **Inflorescence** composed of short densely compacted spikelets, these 3–4–(5), terminal spike male, rather slender, shortly pedunculate, glumes lanceolate, acute, red-brown; remaining spikes female, these sessile, 5–12-flowered, glumes 3.5 × 1.5 mm, dull red-brown, distinctly nerved, lanceolate, acute with the mid rib extending into a scabrid awn. **Utricles** 2–3.5 × 1.5 mm, biconvex to obscurely trigonous, elliptic-lanceolate, spreading when mature, light red-brown, distinctly nerved, narrowed to a more or less scabrid beak 0.5–1 mm long, bidentate, orifice scabrid. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1.5 mm long, dark grey-brown, obtusely trigonous, oblong-obovoid.

SIMILAR TAXA

A well marked species distinguished from the closely allied *C. libera* (Kük.) Hamlin and *C. filamentosa* Petrie by the spikes which lie almost buried within the leaves, sessile female spikes and shortly rhizomatous habit. It could be confused with *C. hectorii* Petrie but that species has much wider, green or reddish-green leaves, and smooth, dark brown mature utricles.

FLOWERING

September–January

FRUITING

October–May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from division of whole plants and fresh seed. Best kept in a pot because it is intolerant of competition and slow growing. Does best in a free draining, moist soil, enriched with magnesium. A very attractive and unusual sedge ideal for tub and pot cultivation on patios and verandahs

THREATS

Naturally uncommon, this species has a biologically sparse distribution, reaching its greatest abundance on ultramafites on the Red Hills, West Dome and the Livingston Range. Elsewhere it is uncommon and some populations have been lost due to weed invasion, trampling from horses and through vehicle damage.

ETYMOLOGY

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

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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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