

Carex astonii

COMMON NAMES

Aston's sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, reddish, tufted sedge. Mature culms 100–200 mm, smooth, terete, basal sheaths grey-brown or light-brown. **Leaves** > culms, up to 350 mm long × 0.7–1.2 mm wide, plano or concavo-convex, reddish, margins scabrid, apex curled (cirrhose). **Inflorescence** of 4–6 sessile spikes, lower most distant, upper approximate; terminal spike male, rest female, these usually with male flowers at the base. **Spikes** 5–10–(150) × 3–5 mm, ovate or cylindrical. **Glumes** ≤ utricles, broadly ovate or oblong, pale brown with light red markings, emarginate, green midrib forming a short scabrid awn < 0.5 (rarely 1 mm) long. **Utricles** 2 × 1–1.3 mm, ovoid to rhomboid, usually trigonous, yellowish and red near tip, glossy, faintly ribbed, beak minute, black or red-brown, smooth, crura entire or bidentate, scabrid. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1 × 1 mm, elliptic-obovoid, trigonous, cream to dark brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex druceana Hamlin (var. *druceana* in Flora of N.Z. Vol. II) has wider leaves, close packed spikelets (lower most rarely distant), glumes with awns up to 2 mm long, and utricles 2.5 × 1.3–1.5 mm. Both *C. astonii* and *C. druceana* resemble *C. petriei* in that they possess reddish, cirrhose-tipped leaves but both species lack the distinctive wide sheaths of *C. petriei*. Leaves of *C. petriei* are more rigid, the glumes more membranous, and the utricles are black except on the beak and stipe.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North Island, where it is apparently only known from the Kaimanawa and Ruahine Ranges.

HABITAT

Montane, subalpine to alpine river terraces, back swamps and on the margins of mires.

THREATS

Rather local in its occurrences. Many of the habitats it was once recorded from in the 1950s and 1960s are now occupied by taller, faster growing weeds.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex astonii Hamlin

SYNONYMS

Carex druceana var. *astonii* (Hamlin) Edgar



The Bowery, Waiouru army training area, Sept 1990. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

No information available

FRUITING

No information available

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Prefers moist soils, with a sunny aspect, free from weeds.

ETYMOLOGY

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

astonii: After Aston

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to indigenous and naturalised Carex in New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

CRXAST

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.60$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Gradual Decline

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

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.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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