

# Carex banksiana

## COMMON NAMES

fine-leaved bastard grass

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely tufted, bright green to blue-green plants. **Culms** 100–350 mm long, much < 0.5 mm diameter, glabrous, terete; basal bracts dull reddish brown. **Leaves** 3–6 per culm, = or > culm, 0.5–1.5 mm wide, very soft, harshly scabrid on margins and upper surface towards the long filiform tip. **Spikes** 30–70 × 1–2 mm, occasionally bracteate, female flowers c. 5–10, all distant, internodes 1–10 mm. long, male glumes scarcely imbricating. **Glumes** much < utricles, deciduous, ovate or oblong, acute or acuminate, hyaline with a green midrib. **Utricles** 4.5–6 mm long, slightly < 1 mm diameter, plano-convex or terete, narrow-lanceolate or oblong, strongly nerved, rarely smooth, green to very pale brown, not spreading at maturity, distinctly contracted to a stipe 0.5–1.0 mm long, beak 1.0–1.5 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Very large specimens of *Carex banksiana* could be confused with *C. hamlinii* K.A.Ford, however *C. hamlinii* usually grows in cooler habitats away from the coast or at higher elevations than *C. banksiana*, and both species have yet to be found growing sympatrically. From *C. hamlinii*, *C. banksiana* differs by its smaller stature, by the glumes which are hardly overlapping and by the more distant female flowers. *C. subviridis* K.A.Ford, another fine-leaved species has a superficial resemblance to *C. banksiana*. Both species have a similar gracile growth habit, and rather fine light-green leaves and lax inflorescences. However, *Carex subviridis* is a larger plant closer set flowers, and with scabrid rather than glabrous utricles.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Te Pahi to the southern Waikato and Bay of Plenty, thence mostly in west to about Wellington), South Island (North-West Nelson, Marlborough Sounds, Canterbury and Otago).

## HABITAT

Next to *Carex uncinata* Linn.f. one of the most common species of northern coastal and lowland forest and scrub.

## GENUS

Carex

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae



Castle Rock, Coromandel. February.

Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Glume (left) and utricle. Ecclesfield Reserve, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/02/2008, Licence: CC BY.

## AUTHORITY

Carex banksiana K.A.Ford

## SYNONYMS

Uncinia banksii Boott; Uncinia riparia R.Br. var. banksii (Boott) C.B.Clarke; Uncinia capillaris Col.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

October–November

## FRUITING

November–April (but old inflorescences present throughout the year)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. Does best in a free draining soil, in a semi-shaded site.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**banksiana**: Named after Sir Joseph Banks, 1st Baronet, GCB, PRS (24 February 1743 - 19 June 1820) was an English naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

CARBAN

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 88

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025”](#) Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

## 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.

### **ATTRIBUTION**

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970). Fact sheet prepared by Peter J. de Lange 17 August 2006. Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-banksiana/) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/) licence.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

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

### **PDF DATE**

27 May 2026