

Carex diandra

COMMON NAMES

sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous; loosely tufted, non tussock-forming, pale or bright green (rarely glaucous green), sedge. Shoots arising singly from the rhizome.

Rhizome c. 2 mm diameter, loosely covered by dark brown sheaths, roots, fibrous, chestnut-brown; shoots approximate, 2–3 mm diameter at base including basal sheaths. **Culms** 150–550 × c. 1 mm, wiry, trigonous, smooth below, angles scabrid above; basal sheaths dark grey-brown.

Leaves < culms, 1.5–3.0 mm wide, channelled, scabrid on the edges, becoming triquetrous towards the tip. **Inflorescence** 15–50 mm long, a compound spike, with a few spikes distant below and ± spikes clustered above, greenish brown, rarely subtended by a leaf-like bract ± = inflorescence. **Spikes** c. 5 mm long, androgynous, male flowers terminal.

Glumes = or slightly < utricles, ovate, brown with wide membranous margins, midrib excurrent, finely scabrid in lower glumes. **Utricles** 3.0–3.5 × 1.5–2.0 mm, plano-convex, occasionally unequally biconvex, broadly ovoid, with short distinct nerves radiating from the base on the convex face, but smooth on the flat face, shining, dark brown; beak c. 1 mm long, sub-pyramidal, light brown, margins scabrid, orifice bifid; stipe minute, c. 0.2 mm long, very narrow. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** 1.5 mm long, biconvex or subtrigonus, obovoid, very much narrowed towards the base, dull brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Somewhat similar to *Carex secta* Boott, *C. appressa* R.Br. and *C. virgata* Sol. ex Boott but easily distinguished by the slender, wiry, loosely tufted growth habit, usually much denser spicate panicles with the males at the top, and by the ovoid, swollen long-beaked utricles that are smooth on one side but ribbed on the other.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North and South Islands. Uncommon in the North Island and mainly found south of the Central Volcanic Plateau. More widespread in the South Island. Also present throughout the North Hemisphere and most of the Southern Hemisphere.

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine in open, moderately fertile to mid oligotrophic wetlands developed on river flats, within forest or in short or tall-tussock grasslands.



In cultivation ex Sedgemere Tarns.
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:
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In cultivation ex Sedgemere Tarns.
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GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex diandra Schrank

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

December–May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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. Although a wetland species *C. diandra* will grow well in most soils and moisture regimes. Does best in full sun. This species could benefit from some selection, for example, some wild forms have rather attractive glaucous foliage.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

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

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CARDIA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.60

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, RR 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.
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

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

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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