

Carex dissita

COMMON NAMES

forest sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shortly rhizomatous; green leafy tufts, drooping above, 0.15-1.00 m high.

Culms 0.5–1.5–(1.7) mm diameter, trigonous, striated, edges smooth; basal sheaths light brown, grey-brown or often dark red-purple. **Leaves** > or < culms, 1.5–5.0 mm wide, double-folded, bright green or yellow-green, or red-green with red margins and midvein red abaxially, margins finely scabrid. **Spikes** 4–8; terminal spike male, rarely with a few female flowers at the top or with 1–2 very small male spikes at the base; remaining spikes female, usually with a few male flowers at the base, more rarely male at the top, 5–30 × 4–6 mm, uppermost spikes erect on very short peduncles, ± distant, lowest spike often quite remote and drooping from a slender peduncle. **Glumes** (excluding awn) slightly < utricles, ovate, emarginate to almost entire, pale reddish green or light brown, to dark red-brown with paler margins, membranous, midrib broad, pale brown, occasionally bright red-purple or straw-coloured, with 3 distinct, almost white, nerves produced to a usually short scabrid mucro. **Utricles** 2.0–3.0 × c. 1.5 mm, biconvex, turgid, ovoid, yellow-brown or cream at the base, red-purple to almost black above, abaxial face usually lighter coloured and more distinctly nerved than the other, margins occasionally very finely scabrid below the beak; beak c. 0.5 mm long, almost white, deeply bifid with divergent crura, orifice scabrid; stipe c. 0.3 mm. long. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** c. 1.5 mm long, trigonous, ovoid, light brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

The distant, dark brown, rather short and stout, usually shortly pedunculate female spikes are a characteristic feature of this species. The utricles are also distinctly bicoloured basally cream to yellow brown and red-purple to black above. This feature helps distinguish this species from *C. solandri* Boott in Hook.f., a species with which it is most often confused, and which usually has uniformly dark coloured utricles (rarely light brown and pale yellow near the base). *Carex solandri* further differs from *C. dissita* by its long filiform peduncles. The two species often grow together.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South and Stewart Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane. Usually in riparian forest, where it may be abundant along stream sides.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae



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



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

AUTHORITY

Carex dissita Sol. ex Boott

SYNONYMS

Carex dissita Boott var. monticola Kük.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

August–November

FRUITING

October–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. A popular species in cultivation, though many plants sold as this species are in fact *C. solandri*. Excellent for a permanently damp situation in a shaded site but will tolerate full sun and dry conditions once established.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (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

CARDIS

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

Fact Sheet prepared 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-dissita/>

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