

# Carex dolomitica

## COMMON NAMES

Mt Burnett sedge

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust, tussock-forming, bronze-green sedge with channelled leaves. Leaves 200–600 × 4–8.5 mm, rigid, erect, channelled, green. **Culms** 400–850 mm long, stout, ascending or spreading, rigid, trigonous, longer than leaves when mature. **Basal sheaths** up to 60 mm long, dark brown or black, nerves distinct. **Spikes** 4–8, up to 40 mm long, erect, upper spikes approximate and sessile, lower 1–(2) spikes distant, shortly pedunculate; spikes subtended by narrow, leaf-like bracts; terminal 1–(2) spikes male; female spikes cylindrical, with three stigmas. **Glumes** 3.3–3.8 × 1.5–2.3 mm, similar length, or shorter than utricles, ovate, elliptic, chestnut brown at base, pale brown above, persistent, 2-lobed at apex, midrib green, awn 0.2–1 mm, weakly scabrid, green. **Utricles** 3.2–4.2 × 1.3–1.9 mm, glabrous, broad-ovoid to ovoid, elliptic or narrowly-elliptic, plano-convex or subtrigonus, black with a pale brown stipe and beak; beak 0.3–0.5 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Perhaps closest to *C. dallii* Kirk, from which differs in its wine red, finer (1–2 mm wide) leaves, and narrower female spikes. However, several as yet unnamed carices are closely allied to *C. dolomitica*, and further work is needed to resolve the relationships between these plants.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, where it is known only from Mt Burnett. There it grows on both North and South Peaks.

## HABITAT

Confined to open or exposed areas of dolomite and dolomite/limestone/marble karrenfield with little associated vegetation. Plants have also colonised the mining roads and old quarry.

## THREATS

*Carex dolomitica* is at serious risk from dolomite mining which is destroying its only known habitat faster than it can recolonise old mine workings. This sedge is also threatened from competition from weeds such as Mexican daisy (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) which have colonised Mt Burnett. *Carex dolomitica* is the only dolomite endemic to have successfully colonised the mine roads.

## GENUS

Carex

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae



At Mt Burnett, Golden Bay. Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Burnett. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/01/2001, Licence: All rights reserved.

## AUTHORITY

Carex dolomitica Heenan et de Lange

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November

## FRUITING

November–September

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy to grow from divisions of whole plants and from fresh seed. An attractive, robust sedge that does well in full sun. It likes a fertile soil and can tolerate free-draining conditions and/or some waterlogging. An excellent rockery plant.

## CULTIVATION

Not commercially available. Some plants are held privately and by at least one Botanic Garden.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for December 2004](#) for the full story.

## 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

CARDOL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.72

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan PB, de Lange PJ. 1997. *Carex dolomitica* (Cyperaceae), a new and rare species from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35(4): 423–428. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1987.10410166>.

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 1 October 2003. Description adapted from Heenan & de Lange (1997).

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Carex dolomitica* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-dolomitica/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

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

### **PDF DATE**

27 May 2026