Carex drucei

COMMON NAMES
Druce's bastard grass, Druce's hook sedge

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Stoloniferous, widely spreading, pale green to reddish-green plants. **Stolons** c. 0.5 mm diameter. **Culms** 50–200 × 0.3–1.0 mm, glabrous; basal bracts light brown or straw-coloured. **Leaves** 5–6–(8) per culm, < culms, 1.0–1.5 mm wide, bright green, soft, the abaxial surface with 3–5 very pale green, raised veins, margins scabrid and tapering towards the narrow, triangular apex. **Spikes** 5–20 × 3–4 mm, up to 10 mm diam. at maturity, oblong, female flowers 7–18, densely crowded, internodes 0.5–1.5 mm long. **Glumes** ≥ utricles, deciduous, subacute, membranous, pale brown with broad green midrib. **Utricles** 4–5 × c. 1 mm, trigonous, elliptic-lanceolate, dark brown, shining, smooth except for a prominent lateral nerve, widely spreading when ripe, slightly contracted below to a stipe c. 1 mm long and above to a beak c. 1.5 mm long.



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

SIMILAR TAXA
Close to *Carex edura* K.A.Ford, which is a very variable species. From *Carex edura*, *C. drucei* differs by its widely spreading, stoloniferous rather than tufted or shortly rhizomatous growth habit, usually more numerous, much narrower, grass-like, soft rather than harshly scabrid leaves, and by the shorter, oblong rather than broadly pyramidal spikes with smaller dark-brown rather than green-brown to dark brown glossy utricles.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand; North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura from Mt Hikurangi and Mt Taranaki south.

HABITAT
.Alpine. In cushion bog, fellfield, snow banks, seepages and herbfield

GENUS
Carex

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY
Carex drucei (Hamlin) K.A.Ford

SYNONYMS
Uncinia drucei Hamlin; Uncinia drucei var. pauciflora Hamlin

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–January

FRUITING
December–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Unknown. Probably easily cultivated in an alpine house of rock garden, grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants.

NEW ZEALAND BOTANICAL HISTORY NOTE
For a brief biography of AP (Tony) Druce, for whom this plant is named, see this article in Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand. Hundreds of Tony's famed plant lists can be found here and back-issues of regional Botanical Society Journals which he contributed can be accessed here.

ETYMOLOGY
carex: Latin name for a species of sedge, now applied to the whole group.
drucei: Named after Anthony (Tony) Peter Druce, one of New Zealand's most respected field botanist (1920-1999).

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to indigenous and naturalised Carex in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CARDRC

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
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient 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 for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-drucei/

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