Carex elingamita

COMMON NAME
Three Kings sedge

SYNONYMS
None

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY
Carex elingamita Hamlin

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

NVS CODE
CARELI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = c.60

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, IE
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RC, IE
2004 | Range Restricted

West Island. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Spikelets. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION
.Endemic. Three Kings Island group where it is present on Great (Manawa Tawhi), North East, South West, West Islands and at least Hinemoa Rock in the Princes group. Naturalised in Auckland City

HABITAT
A species of shaded sites under dense forest, often around petrel burrowed ground, boulder falls and rubble.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Rather leafy, light to dark green, tussock forming sedge of shaded forested slopes and boulder field. **Culms** up to 1 m × 1.5 mm, trigonous, smooth; basal bracts light brown. Leaves < culms, 5–10 mm wide, double folded, margins finely scabrid. **Inflorescence** of 10–12 compound or simple green to grey-green spikes, 60–80 × 5 mm, the lower 2–4 more or less distant on long erect peduncles; terminal spike male, remaining spikes female below with upper ⅓ or more male. **Glumes** equal or < utricles, linear-lanceolate, membranous (somewhat chaffy when old) with red-brown flecks, truncate or almost emarginated, midrib prolonged as a rigid, strongly scabrid awn. **Utricles** 4–4.5 mm long, trigonous, elliptic-lanceolate, strongly nerved, erect or slightly recurved, membranous, grey-green, margins glabrous, beak slightly > 1.5 mm long, margins glabrous, crura scabrid not oblique. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 2 mm long, red-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

As the only wide-leaved sedge present on the Three Kings field recognition is unlikely to be difficult. However as it is now commonly cultivated and has naturalised in at least Auckland City, distinction from the allied *C. kermadecensis* Petrie, *C. forsteri* Wahl. and *C. spinirostris* Colenso is necessary. From *C. kermadecensis*, *C. elingamita* is best distinguished by the lowermost spikes being male in the upper ⅓ or more of their length (rather than entirely female), utricles 4–4.5 mm, rather than 3.5–4 mm long, and by the red-brown rather than dark brown nut. From *C. forsteri*, *C. elingamita* differs by its much smaller stature, and by the crura which is never oblique. *Carex spinirostris* though similar in stature differs by the distinctly pendulous, red-purple rather than suberect to erect, green to grey-green spikes, and by the utricles which are pale grey to bright red in their upper third, rather than uniformly grey green.

FLOWERING

September–December

FRUITING

October–May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed, Can become invasive. Prefers a semi-shaded site but will tolerate full sun. Can be grown in a wide range of soils. Frost and cold sensitive.

THREATS

Not threatened and very common but listed because it occupies a small geographic range.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-elingamita/