

Carex enysii

COMMON NAMES

Enys's sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shortly rhizomatous, swarding dark green to yellow-green diminutive sedge forming a dense, compact turf amongst stones and tussocks.

Culms 0–15–100 × 0.2–0.4–(0.5) mm, terete, shallowly grooved; basal sheaths chestnut-brown to yellow-brown. Leaves about equal in length to culms, 0.3 mm wide, plano-convex, hair-like, lamina involute just above wide brown sheath, margins smooth, apex obtuse. **Inflorescence** solitary, terminal, spike of tightly clustered flowers; female flowers 2–3 overtopping the 1–2 male flowers. **Glumes**: lowermost female glume bractiform, 4–7 mm long; upper female glumes 3 mm long, ovate, acute, brown, midrib green, margin hyaline. **Utricles** 2.5–3 × 1–2 mm, ovoid, subterete, pale brown to very light brown, irrespective of colour becoming distinctly paler toward the base, smooth, glabrous, tapered to a darker beak 1 mm long with a hyaline, oblique orifice; stipe minute or absent.

Stigmas 3. **Rhachilla** enclosed within utricle 1 × 0.3 mm at the base, tapering to a bluntly truncate apex. **Nut** 1.5 mm long, obtusely trigonous.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *C. acicularis* Boott in Hook.f., and *C. allanii* Hamlin, and distinguished from both by the glabrous rather than scabrid utricle beak and shorter rhachilla (1 mm compared with 2 mm in the other two species).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island and South Island. Scarce in the North Island where it is known from two sites (Maungaharuru Range and Mt Ruapehu).

HABITAT

A species of open, moist stony ground, particularly on or near limestone or chlorite schists. Usually found within tussock grassland or associated subalpine scrub. Sometimes present in montane forest.

THREATS

Biologically sparse and probably also overlooked as it is rather small and inconspicuous. At present it does not seem to be threatened although some populations are probably vulnerable to invasive weeds.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae



Mount Arthur (from a specimen collected by Graeme Jane). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



The Twins in the Arthur Range. Photographer: Geoffrey M. Rogers, Date taken: 11/02/2015, Licence: CC BY-SA.

AUTHORITY

Carex ensyii Petrie

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

October–April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and fresh seed but slow growing and somewhat fickle. Best kept in a pot, in full sun with a permanently moist soil.

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.

ensyii: Named in honour of John Davies Enys (1837-1912), a Cornish geologist, biologist and farmer, who owned Castle Hill Station in Canterbury from 1867 to 1891.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CARENY

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Sparse

[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.

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 by P.J. de Lange (8 August 2007). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)
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MORE INFORMATION

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

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