

Carex erythrovaginata

COMMON NAMES

lax bastard grass, hook sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, densely caespitose-tufted, dark green plants. **Culms** 400–750 × 0.5–1.0 mm, trigonous, strongly scabrid above; basal bracts dull reddish brown. **Leaves** 3–6 per culm, < or = culm, 2–3 mm wide, strongly scabrid on margins and upper surface; sheath and basal part of lamina usually reddish pink. **Spike** 60–100 mm long, female flowers c. 10, lax, internodes > mature utricles, 5–14 mm long at base of spike, 2 mm long above; spike often bracteate with lowermost glume leaf-like or setose. **Glumes** much < utricles, persistent, coriaceous obtuse or lowermost subacute, green with paler margins. **Utricles** 5–8 × c. 1 mm, plano-convex or biconvex, fusiform, very faintly nerved, cuneate below forming a stipe c. 1.5 mm long and tapered above to a beak c. 2 mm long stipe and beak green, remainder very light grey.

SIMILAR TAXA

A very distinctive species easily recognised by the stout, leafy tussock-forming habit, narrow, dark green, flat leaves with strongly scabrid upper leaf surfaces. It is perhaps most similar to *Carex strictissima* (Petrie) K.A.Ford with which it has on occasion been confused. From that species it differs by its obviously leafy, rather than rush-like growth habit and by having 3–6 rather than 1–6, ± flat rather than mostly involute leaves which are 2–3 mm wide rather than c. 1 mm. Furthermore the inflorescences are rather lax rather than stiffly erect.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands (as far south as Dunedin).

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually in forest, rarely in scrub.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex erythrovaginata K.A.Ford

SYNONYMS

Uncinia laxiflora Petrie



Bucks Road, Tararua Forest Park.

Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/02/2008, Licence: CC BY.



ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–November

FRUITING

November–January (-March)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. Prefers a permanently moist, peaty soil but will grow in most substrates. Best in semi-shade.

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

CARERY

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

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR, Sp 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 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 Peter J. de Lange 17 August 2006. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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