

Carex fascicularis

COMMON NAMES

sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, tufted, somewhat soft, pale green to yellow-green sedge. **Culms** 0.6–1.1 m tall, 1.5–2.5 mm wide, triquetrous, very finely scabrid; basal sheaths grey. **Leaves** rather > culms, 4–13 mm wide, double-folded, with prominent cross-veinlets on lamina and sheath. **Spikes** 4–6; uppermost 1–(2) spikes male; remaining spikes female, 20–70 × 8–11 mm, usually slightly < male spikes, ± distant, pedunculate, pendulous. **Glumes** (excluding awn) c. ½ length of utricle, lanceolate, light brown, margins of upper half fimbriate or lacerate, midrib produced to a scabrid awn ± = glume in length. **Utricles** 4.0–6.0 × 1.0–1.5 mm, subtrigonus or inflated and biconvex, ovoid, distinctly nerved, light green, strongly reflexed; beak 1.5–2.0 mm long, entirely glabrous; stipe c. 1 mm long, abruptly narrowed. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1.5–2.0 mm long, trigonous with thickened angles, obovoid, pale yellow-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex fascicularis is easily recognised by its stout culms; pale green to yellow green wide leaves; prominent cross-veinlets on sheaths and leaves; initially pendent spikelets, very short glumes with lacerate or fimbriate margins; and by the submembranous, strongly nerved, glabrous, spreading utricles. There are only two other carices in New Zealand with cross-veinlets, the indigenous *C. maorica* Hamlin and naturalised *C. lurida* Wahlenberg. *Carex maorica* differs from *C. fascicularis* by the female spikes mostly sessile rather than pendent, and normally clustered at one level near the base of the male spike rather than mostly distant to ± approximate (but then never clustered at one level round base of male spike). *Carex lurida* is a much larger sedge than either species (up to 2.5 m tall) and has utricles 6–9 × 2–4 rather than 4.0–6.0 × 1.0–1.5 mm.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (abundant in the north to about the Waikato then scarce to about Mokau), South Island (known only from Rarangi). Also Australia, New Guinea and Indonesia.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland in freshwater wetlands, under willow in gully systems, along river and stream banks, lake margins, and in damp seepages, pond margins and clearings within forest. Preferring fertile to mid-fertile wetlands.

GENUS

Carex



Hunahuna stream, Ahipara. Jan 1990.
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Hunahuna stream, Ahipara. Jan 1990.
Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex fascicularis Boott

SYNONYMS

Carex forsteri Wahl. var. fascicularis (Boott) Hook.f.; Carex pseudocyperus L. var. Fascicularis (Boott) Boott

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–May

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. Although a wetland species C. fascicularis will grow well in most soils and moisture regimes. Does best in full sun.

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.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to indigenous and naturalised Carex in New Zealand

NVS CODE

CARFAS

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, SO, Sp

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Relict | Qualifiers: DE, DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR, SO?, 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.

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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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