

# Carex flacca

## COMMON NAMES

carnation sedge

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rather stiff blue-green tufted sedge forming extensive patches. **Rhizome** widely creeping. **Stems** 100–600 mm high,  $\pm$  terete to  $\pm$  3-angled, smooth. **Leaves** 2–3 mm wide,  $<$  stems, double-folded to  $\pm$  flat, stiff, often curved, rather harshly scabrid; sheaths dark brown, often bright red-tinged. **Inflorescence** 50–100 mm long, of 4–6 dark brown, pedunculate spikes, terminal 1–3 male, rest female, often a remote lowermost spike on an extremely long peduncle from near base of stem; subtending bracts leaf-like,  $\pm$  = or  $>$  inflorescence. **Male spikes**  $\pm$  30.0  $\times$  1.5 mm; glumes narrow, obtuse, dark brown with lighter brown midrib not reaching tip of glume. **Female spikes** 20–45  $\times$   $\pm$  4 mm, often male at top; glumes  $<$  utricles, oblong-ovate, subobtuse, dark purple-brown with broad, lighter green to brown midrib. **Utricles**  $\pm$  2.0–2.5  $\times$  1.5 mm, obovoid to  $\pm$  orbicular, often inflated, papillose, red-tinged throughout or green with red patches, beak minute, orifice truncate, dark red. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** ellipsoid, trigonous.

## SIMILAR TAXA

The widely creeping, long rhizomatous habit, blue-green (glaucous) glabrous leaves and dark-purple brown glumes with a distinctly lighter brown midrib are diagnostic of this species.

## HABITAT

Usually in wetlands and often invasive in poorly drained pasture or pasture bordering wetlands. Tolerant of heavy shade and full sun. Often favouring soils overlying calcareous or other base-rich substrates.

## GENUS

Carex

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Carex flacca Schreb.

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No



Te Marua, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 14/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Mature fruit. Te Marua, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 14/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.

## FLOWERING

Late spring

## FRUITING

summer

## YEAR NATURALISED

1883

## ORIGIN

Europe, North Asia, North Africa

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental plant

## CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Seed and rhizomes dispersed by contaminated machinery or garden discards.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

CARFLC

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication.

<https://docs.niwa.co.nz/library/public/FreInSpec.pdf>

Healy AJ, Edgar E. 1980. Flora of New Zealand, Volume III. Adventive Cyperaceous, Petalous and Spathaceous Monocotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 220 p.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA. 1989. Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington, NZ. 319 p.

## ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

08 June 2026