

Carex flagellifera

COMMON NAME

Glen Murray tussock, trip me up

SYNONYMS

Carex lucida Boott

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex flagellifera Colenso

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARFGL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.58

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually in free draining soils under scrub or open forest. Rarely in wetlands or in permanently damp, shaded sites.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/12/2007, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 13/12/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Usually densely tufted, dark green, yellow-green to red-green plants. **Culms** 350–750–(900) × 0.5–1.0 mm, or slightly wider, close-packed, trigonous or subtrigonous, smooth or slightly scabrid for a short distance below inflorescence, usually elongating in fruit up to c. 2.8 m, initially erect, soon prostrate and long trailing; basal sheaths dark brown, occasionally tinged with red-purple, nerves ± distinct. **Leaves** numerous, usually > culms, 1.5–2.5–(4.0) mm. wide, bright shining green, yellow-green or reddish, spreading or drooping at the tips, channelled, margins sharply scabrid. **Spikes** 4–8; terminal 1–2–(3) spikes male, close together, slender; remaining spikes female, 15–30–(40) × 3–5 mm, usually distant, usually pedunculate but ± erect, often male at the base, rarely male at the top also. **Glumes** ± = utricles, broadly ovate, usually obtuse, often with fimbriate margins, occasionally almost emarginate, subcoriaceous, dark or light red-brown, occasionally distinctly nerved, midrib distinct and thickened, conspicuously light brown, almost cream, produced to a short, slightly scabrid awn. **Utricles** 2.0–2.5–(3.0) × c. 1.5 mm, unequally biconvex, almost plano-convex, elliptic-ovoid, light brown at base, usually dark brown towards the top, smooth and shining, or faintly nerved on the more convex face, margins glabrous, rarely very slightly scabrid below beak; beak c. 0.4 mm long, acutely bidentate, margins slightly scabrid; stipe c. 0.3 mm. long. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** < 1.5 mm long, biconvex, ovoid-oblong, dark brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex flagellifera belongs to a complex of allied species which include the South Island, ultramafic endemic *C. devia* Cheesemanii, *C. raoulii* Boott, *C. testacea* Solander ex Boott and *C. goyenii* Petrie. From all these species *C. flagellifera* is best distinguished by its usually long trailing fruiting culms, narrow, channelled leaves, and usually distant, pendent female spikes. It is perhaps closest to *C. testacea* (itself a species complex). From that species, at least in its typical form it differs by the usually yellow-green to dark green, rather than orange-red to red-green culms, and red brown to dark red-brown, subcoriaceous rather than membranous, light brown glumes, which lack the numerous fine, red-brown striae typical of the most widespread form of *C. testacea*.

FLOWERING

September–November

FRUITING

Throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

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. An attractive sedge whose usually long trailing fruiting culms look spectacular if plants are grown along the top of a wall. *Carex flagellifera* is a variable species and would repay some horticultural selection.

ETYMOLOGY

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

flagellifera: From the Latin flagrum 'whip' and ferre 'to bear', meaning bearing a whip-like appendage

ATTRIBUTION

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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