

Carex flaviformis

COMMON NAME

yellow sedge

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex flaviformis Nelves

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARFLA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.64

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North (Cape Palliser), South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Also in Tasmania

HABITAT

Coastal to alpine (up to 1400 m a.s.l.). In the northern part of its South Island range it is usually found well inland. However in the North and Chatham Islands, and in parts of its range on Stewart Island it is mostly found in permanently damp coastal and lowland turfs often bordering slowly flowing streams and wetlands.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



S. Arm, Manapouri, February. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In cultivation ex Cobb Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Yellow-green to yellow, rather stiffly tufted sedge. **Culms** 50–300 × 1.0–1.5 mm, smooth, trigonous, lower half usually ensheathed by leaves; basal bracts cream to dark grey, rarely reddish. **Leaves** much > culms, 2–3 mm wide, initially double-folded but maturing almost flat, margins and keel scabrid towards the tip with small, close-set teeth. **Inflorescence** of 3–8 yellow-green, sessile, densely crowded spikes forming a head up to 30 mm long and up to 25 mm diameter, occasionally all spikes androgynous, or terminal spike male, 10–20 mm × 1.5–2.0 mm, lateral spikes female or androgynous, upper more often androgynous, lower more often female, 6–15 × 6–8 mm.; bracts subtending inflorescence leaf-like, often overtopping the foliage leaves. **Glumes** much < utricles, oblong-ovate, obtuse, membranous, white, sometimes tinged with brown, the centre green, with white midrib not usually excurrent. **Utricles** 3.5–4.5 × c. 1.5 mm., inflated or subtrigonous, ovoid, rather bright yellow-green, spreading when mature, nerves well-marked; beak 1.0–1.5 mm long, very narrow, green, papillose, shortly bifid with scabrid orifice or almost entire; stipe minute or absent. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** c. 1.5 mm long, trigonous with thickened angles, especially near centre of nut, obovoid, light yellow-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

The yellow-green to yellow leaves and yellow-green utricles immediately distinguish *Carex flaviformis* from all but the naturalised *C. demissa* Hornem. *Carex demissa* differs from *C. flaviformis* by the male spike which is shortly pedunculate rather than sessile; and by the female spikes which are not very closely clustered (rather than closely clustered) at the base of the male spike, typically with lowest rather distant.

FLOWERING

October–January

FRUITING

December–June

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 division of established plants. Tolerant of a wide range of conditions but prefers full sun and permanently damp substrate. The yellowish foliage is rather attractive.

ETYMOLOGY

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

flaviformis: Like a European yellow sedge

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-flaviformis/>