

# Carex geminata

## COMMON NAME

cutty grass, rautahi

## SYNONYMS

*Carex ternaria* var. *gracilis* Cheeseman, *C. confusa* Hamlin.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex geminata* Schkuhr

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARGEM

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Found throughout the North, South and Stewart Islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane in freshwater wetlands, along river and stream banks, lake margins, and in damp seepages, pond margins and clearings within forest. Preferring fertile to mid-fertile wetlands.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous, robust bright-green to yellow-green sedge, 0.5–1.2 m tall. **Culms** 1.5–3.5–(5) mm diam., triangular in cross-section, very sharply scabrid. **Basal sheaths** dull grey-brown or purple-brown. **Leaves** numerous, > culms (2)–5–9–(11), wide, double-folded, margins very scabrid. **Spikes** (10)–15–24, yellow-green, grass-green, or dark-green mottled red or purple, all pedunculate, pendulous, rather narrow, often twisted and “worm-like”. **Glumes** dark red-purple, (excluding awns) more less same length as utricles, narrow-oblong, truncate or emarginate with a hispid awn of variable length. **Utricles** (2)–2.3–2.9–(3.5) × 1.2–1.7–(2) mm, biconvex, compressed at base, tapering evenly above, green-, red- or yellow-brown, 3–5-nerved, margins glabrous, beak minute or 0.2 mm long.



Coromandel, March - an unnamed carex allied to *C. geminata* s.s. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Seeds of *Carex geminata*. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Carex geminata* has frequently been confused with *C. lessoniana* Steud. This species often grows in similar habitats, but can be distinguished by the compact inflorescences, with wider, though smaller, usually erect spikelets, and by distinctly beaked utricles. A similar species *C. ternaria* Boott is occasionally cultivated on the New Zealand mainland, this species is very much larger (up to 3 m tall), dark green sedge with much larger spikes and glumes which are conspicuously awned. Can also be confused with *C. coriacea* Hamlin, but the glumes of *C. coriacea* do not have awns.

## FLOWERING

(September)–October–November–(December)

## FRUITING

October–March

## 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. Although a wetland species, *C. geminata* will grow well in most soils and moisture regimes. Does best in full sun.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**geminata:** Twinned

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commonly cultivated, and plants offered by this name by many nurseries are usually other quite unrelated species, including the Northern Hemisphere *C. pendula* and the New Zealand subantarctic endemic *C. ternaria*.

## NOTES ON TAXONOMY

This taxon includes two entities, one probably better regarded as an allied but distinct, possibly unnamed species which differs from true *C. geminata* by its much broader, often yellow-green leaves, longer narrower spikelets, preference for open sunny sites within coastal and lowland wetlands, and also by distinct differences within the nrDNA ITS sequence region.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN 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

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Carex geminata* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-geminata/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

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