

Carex hectorii

COMMON NAME

Hector's sedge

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex hectorii Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARHEC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.64-68$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island known only from Mt Taranaki (Eganaki/Taramont) and adjacent Pouakai Range. In the South Island widespread in Nelson and Central Otago.

HABITAT

A species of montane, subalpine to alpine wetlands, favouring flushes, cushion bogs, seepages or the margins of tarns, ponds usually within tussock grassland.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

Shortly rhizomatous, loosely tufted blue-green to red-green sedge of open damp ground, seepages, and flushes in tussock grassland, or fringing cushion bogs, tarns and ponds. Culms 20-120 x 0.5 mm, usually obscured within light brown leaf-sheaths. Leaves longer than culms, 0.5-1.5 mm wide, blue-green (rarely wine red, red-green to bright green), erect, rigid, lamina plano-convex at the base but flattening or occasionally subtrigonus towards the subacute apex, margins distinctly scabrid near the apex. Inflorescence of 3-4 contiguous, sessile or shortly pedunculate spikes 0.5-15 mm long. Spikes subtended by rigid, leaf-like bracts; these longer than inflorescence. Terminal spike male, remaining spikes female. Glumes 2.2-2.4 mm long, lanceolate, acuminate, or cuspidate, membranous, brown, with membranous margins and pale green midrib. Utricles 2.5-3 x 1.5-2 mm, trigonous, elliptic-ovoid, spreading, conspicuously multi-nerved when immature, maturing glossy and more or less smooth, dark brown; beak 0.5 mm long, slender, acutely bifid, margins usually ciliate-serrate above; stipe short. Stigmas 3. Nut trigonous.

SIMILAR TAXA

Could be confused with *Carex uncifolia* Cheeseman, from which it chiefly differs by its wider, blue-green to green (rarely wine-red to red-green) rather than dark red to beetroot red leaves, and smooth, dark brown, rather than distinctly nerved, red-brown mature utricles. *Carex hectorii* is superficially similar to *C. decurtata* Cheeseman from which it differs by its shortly rhizomatous, lax tufted rather than densely (rigidly) tufted habit, usually blue-green rather than bright-green to yellow-green leaves and dark-brown rather than light brown utricles.

FLOWERING

September - December

FRUITING

October - July

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from division of whole plants and fresh seed. Does best in a permanently moist soil in full sun. An excellent pot plant. Leaf colour varies and can be unstable in some populations. This species would benefit from some horticultural selection.

ETYMOLOGY

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

hectorii: Named after Sir James Hector, 19th century New Zealand geologist and botanist who was originally from Scotland

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, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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