

Carex imbecilla

COMMON NAME

feeble bastard grass, hook sedge

SYNONYMS

Uncinia gracilentata Hamlin

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex imbecilla K.A.Ford

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

UNCGRA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 88$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

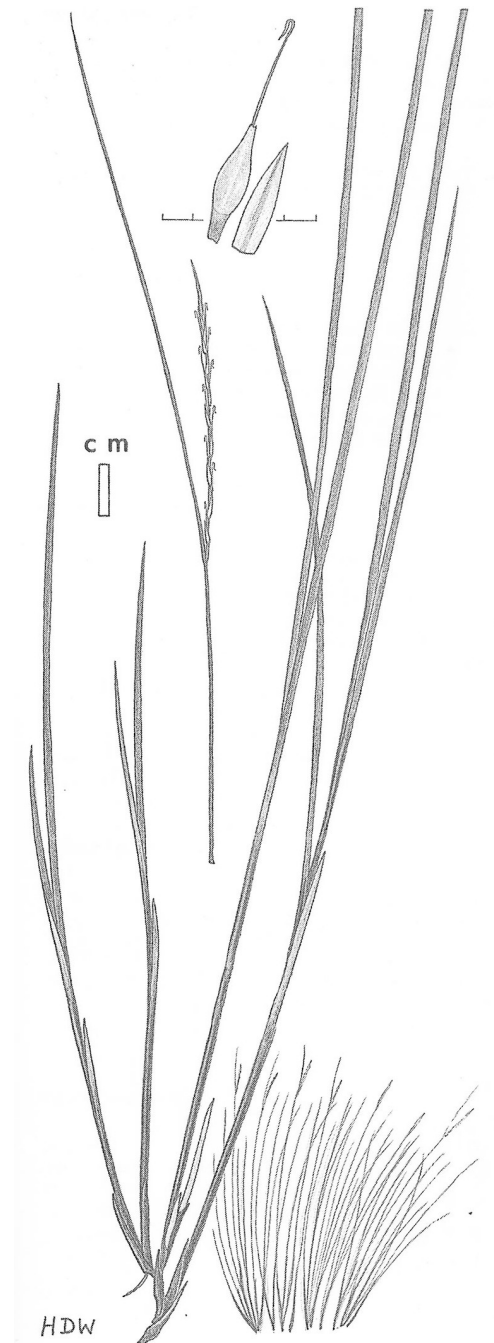
2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North (from about Whangarei south) South (Marlborough Sounds, northern Marlborough, Nelson, Otago, South Canterbury, Westland, Fiordland) and Stewart Islands

HABITAT

Mostly montane forest, cloud forest or in subalpine scrub, often on or near rotting logs. Descending to coastal areas in the southern part of its range.



Reproduced with permission from Stewart Island plants (1982). Photographer: Hugh D. Wilson

FEATURES

Loosely tufted, dark green or reddish-green plants. Culms 100.0-420.0 × c.0.5 mm, glabrous or rarely scabrid below inflorescence; basal sheaths dark brown, shining. Leaves 4-6 per culm, usually > culm, 1.0-2.0 mm, wide, dark green or reddish green, margins moderately scabrid. Spikes 50-70 × c.2 mm, usually bracteate, the bract leaf-like and far overtopping spike, or setose and shorter than spike, female flowers c.15-20, ± equidistant in lower part of spike with internodes to 6 mm long, c.2 mm apart above. Glumes < utricles, deciduous, acuminate, hyaline with green midrib. Utricles 4-5 × c.1mm, trigonous, elliptic-lanceolate or oblong, green, faintly nerved with the lateral nerves more prominent, scarcely spreading when ripe, stipe 1.0-1.5 mm long, beak c.1mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from other species by the glossy (shining), dark brown, basal bracts and the short, (usually hidden amongst the leaves), lax-flowered spikes with ± equidistant utricles. *Carex imbecilla* shares with *C. erebus* K.A.Ford and *C. aucklandica* (Hamlin) K.A.Ford dark brown basal bracts, from both these species it is distinguished by the spikes which are greater than 50 mm long. *Uncinia hookeri* is confined to the Subantarctic islands, and *C. aucklandica* the southern South Island, Stewart Island and Auckland and Campbell Islands. *Carex imbecilla* is potentially sympatric with only *C. aucklandica*, and only then in the very southern part of its range.

FLOWERING

October - December

FRUITING

November - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants - though these may take a while to settle. Prefers moist soil in a semi-shaded site.

ETYMOLOGY

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

imbecilla: Weak

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by Peter J. de Lange 17 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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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