

# Carex imbecilla

## COMMON NAME

feeble bastard grass, hook sedge

## SYNONYMS

*Uncinia gracilentia* 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

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

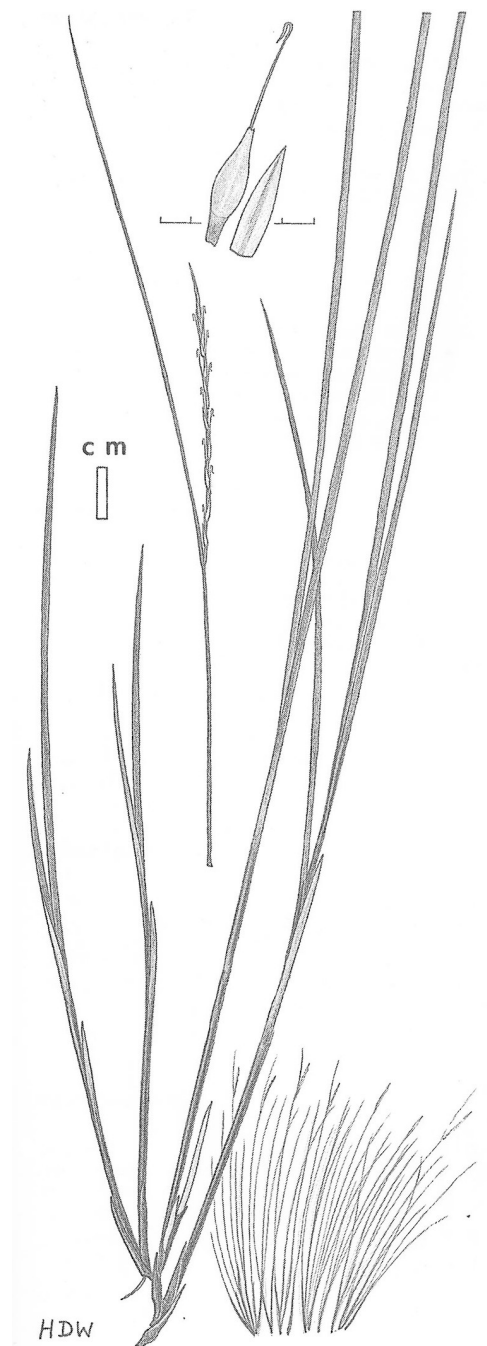
2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

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

## 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.



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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Loosely tufted, dark green or reddish-green plants. **Culms** 100–420 × 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. 1 mm, 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. 1 mm 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. *Carex erebus* is confined to the Subantarctic islands, and *C. aucklandica* the southern South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku. *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 LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

## 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/>