

Carex kaloides

COMMON NAME

sedge

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex kaloides Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARKAL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.78-84

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island in the east from Marlborough to Central Otago.

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine along river flats, in seepages, around the margins of lakes, ponds and tarns. Sometimes found in cushion bogs and amongst red tussock (*Chionochloa rubra* Zotov)-dominated wetlands. Easily overlooked because its orange yellow leaves blend in with the surrounding taller vegetation.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous; orange yellow, reddish-yellow to orange, tufted swarding sedge. Individual tufts often rather large and tussock-like. **Rhizome** 5 mm diameter, woody, covered in closely appressed, dark-brown, fibrous leaf-sheath remnants. **Culms** rising singly from rhizome, 0.3–1 m × 1 mm, at first stiffly erect, then arching and more or less spreading in upper third; trigonous, glabrous below, very finely scabrid on the angles close to the inflorescence; basal sheaths dull dark grey-brown to yellow-brown. **Leaves** < culms, 100–600 × 1–3.5 mm, channeled, keel well-marked, margins scabridulous near apex. **Inflorescence** erect, 50–180 mm long, usually compound or in large plants paniculate with distant appressed branchlets. **Spikes** 10–35, pale straw-coloured, usually distant, lower spikes and branchlets typically subtended by a chartaceous, long-awned bract with both keel and awn scabrid; lowermost bracts often leaf-like, > panicle in length; mostly male with perfect flowers near apex, or with mostly female with male flowers near the apex or in rare cases entirely male. **Glumes** > utricles, lanceolate, acuminate or awned, membranous to chartaceous, light creamy brown with a pale cream centre and rather broad hyaline margins. **Utricles** 4–5 × 1 mm, plano-convex, finely nerved; beak tapering, 1.5–2 mm long, winged with serrated margins; stipe 1 mm long, not contracted. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** 2 mm, dark brown, plano-convex to biconvex, oblong, smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

Perhaps closest to *C. muelleri* Petrie which differs from *C. kaloides* by its smaller stature, more extensively creeping swarding habit, strictly erect whitish-green, yellow-green to green tufted culms and leaves, creeping habit, and narrowly erect almost dioecious spicate inflorescences. The utricles of *C. muelleri* are much smaller, narrower and rather more strongly nerved.

FLOWERING

October–January

FRUITING

October–May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown by division of whole plants and fresh seed. Does best in permanently damp ground and is an ideal plant for growing around ponds or along slow flowing stream margins in the South Island. It dislikes much competition and is intolerant of drought or excessive humidity.

THREATS

A biologically sparse, naturally uncommon species which at times can be locally abundant but is otherwise scarce. Does not appear to be threatened, and can tolerate cattle browsing. However it is vulnerable to competition from faster growing, taller exotic plant species.

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

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.

MORE INFORMATION

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