

Carex kirkii var. elatior

COMMON NAMES

sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Data Deficient

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shortly rhizomatous, bright to dark green densely tufted sedge. **Culms** much > leaves, 80–210 × c. 0.5 mm diameter, triquetrous, smooth, upper part not enclosed by leaf-sheaths; basal sheaths chestnut. **Leaves** 3–5 per culm, 90–350 × 0.5–1.5 mm, involute or flattened, wiry, striated, scabrid towards the acute tip. **Inflorescence** a compound spike, 10–40 × c. 5 mm, pale green or pale brown. **Spikes** distant, especially the lower ones, which may be with or without a subtending leaf-like bract; androgynous, male flowers terminal, occasionally absent in the lower spike. **Glumes** = or slightly >, rarely < utricles, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate or acute, membranous, light brown or almost colourless, midrib light green, prominent in the lowermost glumes and often scabrid towards the tip. **Utricles** 4.0–4.5 × c. 1 mm, plano-convex, elliptic-obovoid, ± papillose, strongly nerved slightly winged; beak 1.5–2.0 mm long, scabrid on the margins, orifice oblique, bifid; stipe minute or absent. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** c. 2 mm long, plano-convex, oblong, shortly stipitate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex kirkii Petrie var. *kirkii* differs by the shorter culms (up to 40 mm cf. 210 mm in var. *elatior*) which remain hidden amongst the leaf-sheaths at maturity rather than elongating; shorter (up to 200 × 0.5 mm cf. 350 × 1.5 mm) involute rather than involute or flattened leaves; and shorter (10–15 × c. 5 mm cf. 10–40 × c. 5 mm) crowded rather than distinct spikes. The whole inflorescence is normally subtended by a leaf-like bract, which in var. *elatior* is usually absent (rarely present at the base of the lower few spikes).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island, North-West Nelson (Mt Arthur Plateau) and Otago (Mt St Bathans).

HABITAT

Unclear. Known only from gatherings made at two locations: - the Mt Arthur Plateau at 1200 m a.s.l. and from Mt St Bathans (at 900 m a.s.l.). The type variety grows in snow-tussock (*Chionochloa*) grassland and herbfield.



A herbarium specimen: AK 2486. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Herbarium specimen: AK 2486. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date

THREATS

Unknown. This variety is only known from the type gatherings from the Arthur Plateau and from a single gathering from Mt St Bathans all made in the late 1800s. It has not been collected from the wild since. This variety may be extinct. However, as no specific surveys for it have been undertaken a definitive conservation assessment cannot yet be made.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex kirkii var. elatior Kük.

SYNONYMS

None

TAXONOMIC NOTES

There is considerable doubt about the taxonomic validity of this variety. It is known from only a handful of collections.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Unknown

FRUITING

Unknown

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown. Probably rather like *C. kirkii* Petrie var. *kirkii* which is easily grown.

ETYMOLOGY

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

kirkii: After Thomas Kirk (18 January 1828 - 8 March 1898), a NZ botanist and lecturer in natural sciences and regarded as a leader of botanical enquiry in NZ for over three decades. One of his most significant publications was Forest flora of NZ (1889) but he also contributed over 130 papers to the Transactions and Proceedings of the NZ Institute and other journals.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to indigenous and naturalised Carex in New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

CARKVE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Evaluated

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Data Deficient

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

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.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970) and from examination of type material held at AK (see images).

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-kirkii-var-elator/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-kirkii-var-elator/>

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