

Carex kirkii var. kirkii

COMMON NAME

Kirk's sedge

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex kirkii Petrie var. *kirkii*

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARKVK

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.68-70

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island North-West Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago.

HABITAT

Alpine (900–1900 m a.s.l.). Usually in snow-tussock (*Chionochloa*) grassland, associated herbfield and on semi-consolidated talus.

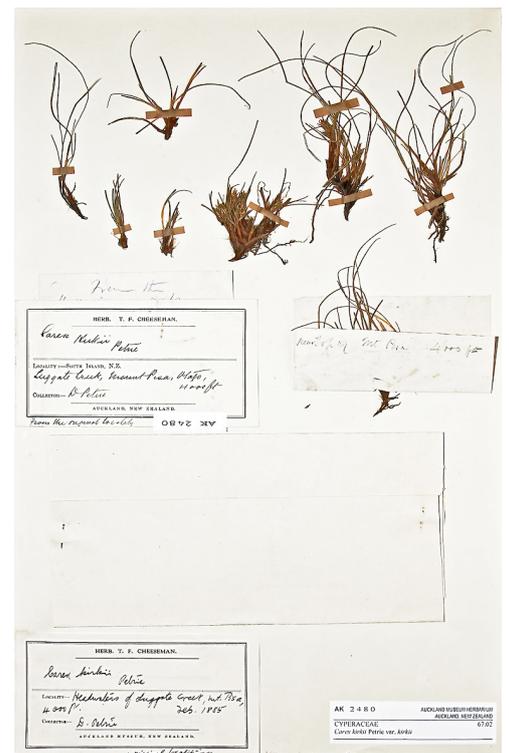
WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



Old Woman Range (from a specimen collected by Graeme Jane). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Herbarium specimen: AK 2480. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shortly rhizomatous, bright to dark green densely tufted sedge. **Culms** much, 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 var. *elator* Kük. differs by the longer culms (up to 210 mm cf. 40 mm in var. *kirkii*) which elongate well above the leaves and surrounding leaf-sheaths at maturity rather than remain hidden amongst the leaf-sheaths; longer (up to 350 × 1.5 mm cf. 200 × 0.5 mm) involute or flattened rather than involute leaves; and longer (10–40 × c. 5 mm cf. 10–15 × c. 5 mm) distinct rather than crowded spikes. Only occasionally are the lower-most spikes of var. *elator* specimens subtended by a leaf-like bract, while in var. *kirkii* the whole inflorescence is almost always subtended by such a bract.

FLOWERING

November–December

FRUITING

December–February

LIFE CYCLE

Winged utricles are dispersed by water, granivory and wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. Best planted in full sun in a free-draining, permanently damp soil within a rock garden, or grown in a pot. Dislikes humidity and will not flower in warmer, northern lowland situations.

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.

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (110 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.

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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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