

# Carex 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

2018 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

## 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

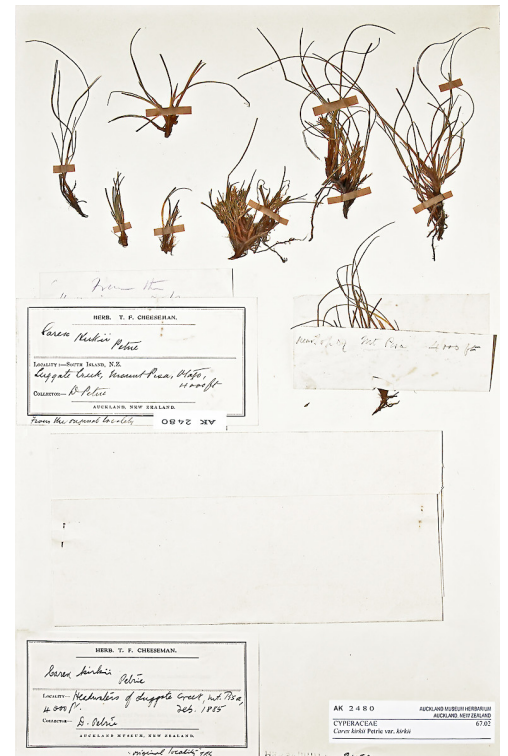
Alpine (900-1900 m a.s.l.). Usually in snow-tussock (*Chionochloa*) grassland, associated herbfield and on semi-consolidated talus.

## FEATURES

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.



Old Woman Range (from a specimen collected by Graeme Jane). Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Herbarium specimen: AK 2480. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe, photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Carex kirkii* var. *elatior* Kük. differs by the longer culms (up to 210 mm cf. 40 mm in var. *elatior*) which elongate well above the leaves and surrounding leaf-sheaths at maturity rather than remain hidden amongst the leaf-sheaths; longer (up to 350 x 1.5 mm cf. 200 x 0.5 mm) involute or flattened rather than involute leaves; and longer (10-40 x c.5 mm cf. 10-15 x c.5 mm) distinct rather than crowded spikes. Only occasionally are the lower-most spikes of var. *elatior* 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, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora.

*Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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