

Carex lambertiana

COMMON NAMES

forest sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufts robust, leafy, 0.6–1.0 m tall. **Culms** 1–2 mm diameter, trigonous, smooth; basal sheaths dark grey-brown or purple-black. **Leaves** ± = culms, 3–6 mm wide, double-folded, bright green or yellow-green, margins finely scabrid. **Spikes** 5–8; terminal 1–(3) spikes male; remaining spikes female, often male at the base, 15–50 × 5–7 mm, cylindrical, uppermost spikes approximate and sessile, lower spikes more distant, erect, on short, stiff peduncles. **Glumes** (excluding awn) ± = utricles, ovate, pinkish brown to chestnut-brown, membranous, hyaline margins often very broad, tip deeply emarginate, the light green or brown midrib produced to a scabrid awn. **Utricles** 2.5–3.5 × c. 1.5 mm, biconvex, obovoid, turgid, usually dark brown to almost purple-black throughout with distinct, paler brown nerves, shining; beak slightly < 1 mm long, bifid, with very divergent crura, margins and orifice scabrid. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** c. 1.5 mm long, trigonous, light to dark brown, surface minutely pitted.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex lambertiana often grows with *C. dissita* Sol. ex Boott, *C. ochrosaccus* (Cheeseman) Hamlin, and *C. solandri* Boott. Of these species it is most similar to *C. dissita* from which it differs by the stouter, more robust habit, larger spikelets usually erect, shortly pedunculate spikelets bearing more numerous flowers and utricles; obovoid rather than ovoid utricles, and glumes which have deeply emarginate apices. From *C. ochrosaccus* with which it often grows, it differs by the longer, darker brown to almost purple black utricles and by the glumes which have deeply emarginate tips. *Carex lambertiana* could also be confused with *C. solandri* from which it is easily distinguished by the usually short rather than long pedunculate, erect rather than pendulous, spikelets.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands. In the North Island abundant from Te Pahi to about the southern Waikato, otherwise uncommon. In the South Island known from Nelson, Marlborough and northern Canterbury.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually in relatively open but shaded sites within tall forest or in riparian forest along riversides and on river terraces. Sometimes establishes in parks within urban areas



Carex lambertiana. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.



Gordon Park Scenic Reserve, Wanganui. Dec 2006. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex lambertiana Boott

SYNONYMS

Carex dissita Boott var. lambertiana (Boott) Cheeseman

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–December

FRUITING

Throughout the year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. A far superior species to the widely cultivated *C. dissita*, and it deserves to be more widely grown. It does best in partial shade, within a rich, free draining soil. This species occasionally naturalises in urban areas.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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

ETYMOLOGY

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

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CARLAM

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

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 (31 August 2006): Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970) - see also de Lange et al. (2010).

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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