

# Carex leporina

## COMMON NAME

oval sedge

## SYNONYMS

*Carex ovalis* Gooden.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex leporina* L.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARLEP

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Dense pale green grass-like tufts or mat-like swards up to 1 m tall, with slightly taller flower stem bearing brown oval heads near the tip.

## DISTRIBUTION

Locally common throughout New Zealand.

## HABITAT

Wide variety of wet habitats from lowland to subalpine, especially disturbed habitats, but also a problem weed in short turf wetland where it can completely displace indigenous vegetation.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

## FEATURES

Dense tufts; rhizome short. Stems 20-60-(120) cm high, 3-angled, scabrid just below inflorescence. Leaves 1.5-3.5 mm wide, usually < stems, ± flat, ± soft, bright green, sheaths light brown. Inflorescence a compact ovoid head 2.5-4- (6) cm long, of 3-5- (11) approximate, sessile, light green to light brown spikes; bracts glume-like and inconspicuous or > inflorescence and ± setaceous. Spikes androgynous, male flowers at base. Glumes = or slightly < utricles, light brown with paler green to brown midrib, acute. Utricles 4-4.5 × ± 2 mm, ovoid, plano-convex, distinctly nerved, with winged margins almost covered by glumes, scabrid towards the tapered beak of ± 1 mm long. Stigmas 2. Nut plano-convex, ± oblong.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Two other *Carex* spp. have oval spikes (*C. scoparia* and *C. longii*). Both these species have glumes shorter than the utricles, so *C. leporina* spikes appear less compact (see comparison with *C. scoparia* in photo).

## FLOWERING

Late spring to early summer

## FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green



Tararua Range. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Tararua Range. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## FRUITING

Summer to autumn

## LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by contaminated machinery or waterfowl.

## YEAR NATURALISED

1879

## ORIGIN

Europe, Asia, North Africa

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

## CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Healy and Edgar (1980).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Healy, A.J.; Edgar, E. (1980). Flora of New Zealand, Volume III. Adventive Cyperaceous, Petalous and Spathaceous Monocotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington. 220pp.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA (1989). Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington. 319pp.

Champion et al (2012). Freshwater Pests of New Zealand. NIWA publication.

<http://www.niwa.co.nz/freshwater-and-estuaries/management-tools/identification-guides-and-fact-sheets/freshwater-pest-species>

## MORE INFORMATION

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