

# Carex obtusifolia

## COMMON NAME

fine-leaved bastard grass

## SYNONYMS

*Uncinia obtusifolia* Heenan

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex obtusifolia* (Heenan) K.A.Ford

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

UNCOBT

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 88

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island found only in the mountainous regions of the southern half; in the South Island present mainly west of the main divide (rarely in the east). Found throughout Stewart Island.

## HABITAT

Wet ground in bogs, damp flushes, hollows, and seepages in tussock grassland, around the margins of clearings, among open scrub, and in open pasture in lowland and low-alpine areas.



*Carex obtusifolia*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Dorset Ridge, Tararua Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/03/2008, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small tufts to small tussocks, laxly to densely caespitose, sometimes with fine creeping rhizomes. **Culms** glabrous, trigonous, at flowering similar in length to leaves, at maturity much longer than leaves, 50–400 × 0.3–0.6 mm; basal bracts light brown to yellow-brown, dull, 2–7 mm long. **Leaves** plano-convex or concavo-convex, rigid, linear, strongly nerved on abaxial surface, erect or ascending, 45–300 × 0.4–0.5 mm; apex obtuse and nerves weak or absent; margins scabrous when young, often becoming glabrous when mature. **Spikes** oblong, 15–20 mm long; female flowers proximal, 3–7, internodes 1.5–3.0 mm long; male flowers distal, 3–5. **Glumes** < utricles, deciduous, elliptic-lanceolate to lanceolate, 3.5–5.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm; midrib green; apex subacute to obtuse; margins membranous. **Utricles** trigonous, elliptic to lanceolate, yellow-green, yellow-brown, or light brown, lateral nerves present but not conspicuous, 5.0–6.2 × 0.9–1.1 mm; stipe and beak both narrow, each c. 1.5 mm long; rachilla exerted beyond utricles, 5.3–6.5 mm long. **Nut** trigonous, narrow-elliptic to linear, pale brown, dull, 3.0–3.9 × 0.8–1.1 mm

## SIMILAR TAXA

Previously included within the allied *Carex cheesemanniana* (Boeckeler) K.A.Ford from which it differs by its much finer (almost capillary) narrower leaves, culms, spikes, and utricles. The utricles are yellow-brown rather than dark brown; and unlike *Carex cheesemanniana* the glumes are smaller and shorter than the utricles, further the floret internodes are longer than in *C. cheesemanniana*. The nuts of *Carex obtusifolia* are narrower and longer than those of *C. cheesemanniana*. It could also be confused with the forest dwelling *Carex lectissima* K.A.Ford. That species is distinguished from all other New Zealand Uncinia by the light-coloured striations on the red-brown basal sheaths, and from *Carex obtusifolia* by the trigonous upper part of the leaf and by the acute rather than obtuse leaf apex.

## FLOWERING

November–December

## FRUITING

December–May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown. However like *Carex debilior* (F.Muell.) K.L.Wilson it is probably easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. It probably requires a permanently damp, peaty soil and semi-shaded conditions.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**obtusifolia**: With a blunt leaf

## WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

## ATTRIBUTION

Description and details from Heenan (1995). Fact sheet prepared by Peter J. de Lange 17 August 2006.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan PB. 1995. *Uncinia obtusifolia*. (Cyperaceae), a new species of hooked sedge in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 34(1): 11–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1996.10412687>.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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