

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

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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



Dorset Ridge, Taranua Range. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

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 < utricle, 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 utricle, 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 utricle, 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* 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, P.B. 1995: *Uncinia obtusifolia*. (Cyperaceae), a new species of hooked sedge in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 34: 11-15

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/>