

Carex secta

COMMON NAMES

purei, pukio

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tussock forming sedge up to 1.5 × 0.8 m, mature specimens with trunk-like bases comprised of matted rhizomes, roots and old culm-bases.

Culms 0.25–1–(1.5) m, drooping, trigonous, scabrid, basal sheaths brown to light-brown. **Leaves** 1.5–7 mm wide, light green to yellow-green (rarely dark green—then in heavy shade), equal to or longer than culms, drooping, channelled, margins and keel scabrid. **Inflorescence** a loosely branched, somewhat slender, drooping panicle 0.45–1 m long. **Spikes** pale brown, mostly clustered towards the ends of the slender branchlets. **Utricles** chestnut brown to dark brown, margins weakly winged, scabrid, light brown to brown, apex with a minute to distinct beak.

SIMILAR TAXA

C. appressa, *C. sectoides*, *C. tenuiculmis* and *C. virgata*. From *C. appressa* and *C. virgata*, it can be distinguished by its branched, drooping, paniculate inflorescence. From *C. sectoides*, by its smaller stature, and slender, longer, drooping inflorescence branchlets. *C. sectoides* is sympatric with *C. secta* at only one site on main Chatham Island. From *C. tenuiculmis*, it differs by its light green to yellow-green, rather than wine-red foliage, and larger panicles with more numerous branchlets.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Found throughout the North, South and Stewart Islands. Also on the main Chatham Island, though scarce.

HABITAT

Widespread in suitable wetlands from coastal to montane wetlands.

GENUS

Carex

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex secta Boott

SYNONYMS

Carex virgata var. *secta* (Boott) Hook.f., *C. paniculata* var. *secta* (Boott) Cheeseman, *C. appressa* var. *secta* (Boott) Kük.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes



Coromandel, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Utricles. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 05/02/2008, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

(September)–October–November–(December)

FRUITING

October–March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Nuts surrounded by inflated utricles are dispersed by granivory and wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. Although a wetland species *C. secta* will grow well in most soils and moisture regimes. Does best in full sun.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

CULTIVATION

Commonly cultivated. Sold by most garden centres.

ETYMOLOGY

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

secta: Much divided (panicle)

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CARSEC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.70$

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 Not Threatened 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.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)
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MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026