Carex subviridis

COMMON NAMES
hook sedge, bastard grass, hook grass

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Rather gracile, very light- to dark green, tussock-forming, plants. **Culms** 250–600 × 0.5 mm, slightly scabrid above; basal sheaths light brown or reddish, occasionally enclosing the culm for more than half its length. **Leaves** 4–7 per culm, culms, 1.5–3.0 mm wide, sharply scabrid on margins, slightly scabrid on upper surface towards tip. **Spikes** 40–140 mm long, often bracteate, lowermost glumes occasionally leaf-like and much > spike, male portion relatively long, female flowers c. 10–20, ± distant, internodes 6–12 mm long below, 2 mm long above. **Glumes** < utricles, deciduous, acute, lower 2–3 acuminate and often produced to a scabrid awn, membranous, green. **Utricles** 5.5–9.0 × c. 1.0 mm., plano-convex, narrow-oblong, light green or light brown, distinctly nerved, beak 1.5–2.0 mm long, narrow, with scabrid margins and occasionally a few teeth on the abaxial surface, stipe 1.5–2.0 mm long, narrow.

SIMILAR TAXA
Carex hamlinii K.A.Ford, another fine-leaved hook sedge has a superficial resemblance to *C. subviridis*. Both species have a similar gracile growth habit, and rather fine light-green leaves and lax inflorescences. However, *Carex hamlinii* is a more southerly species of higher elevation forest, which is easily distinguished from *C. subviridis* by its glabrous rather than scabrid utricles. In the northern part of its range *Carex subviridis* may grow with another fine-leaved species *Carex banksiana* K.A.Ford, from which it differs by its greater stature, and scabrid rather than glabrous utricles.

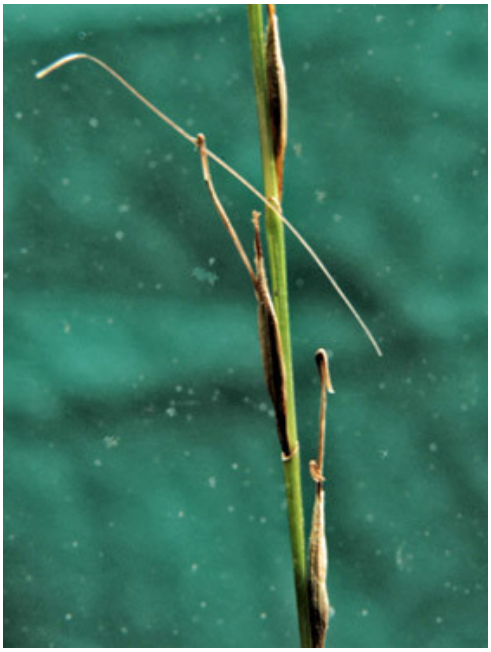
DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand. North and South Islands. Often sparsely distributed but locally common in the Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Auckland and Northland.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane. Usually in forest, especially alluvial and riparian forest, or in dune forest. Also common in karst country around sink holes, tomo and within dolines..

GENUS
Carex

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

Utricles with exserted stigmas. Eastern Wairarapa (from specimen collected by Pat Enright). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/09/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Gordon Park, Wanganui. Feb 2007. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY
Carex subviridis K.A.Ford

SYNONYMS
Uncinia distans Col. ex Boott; Uncinia nelmesii Hamlin

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–December

FRUITING
November–June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants, though these may take a while to settle. Prefers moist soil in a a semi-shaded site. However, once established will tolerate a wide range of conditions except waterlogging.

WHERE TO BUY
Not Commercially Available

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
CARSUV

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 88

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 At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF 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 Peter J. de Lange (17 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from Flora of New Zealand Online and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-subviridis/

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