

Carex tahoata

COMMON NAMES

mountain teasel sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Assessed

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, caespitose, red, reddish-green to bronze green sedge up to 0.8 m tall. **Culms** 100–600 × 0.5–1 mm, trigonous, scabrid on the angles above, or subterete and smooth. **Leaves** reddish, red-green, 250–600 × 1.5–2.2 mm, conduplicate or subuplicate, scabrid on the margins and upper surfaces, basal sheaths short, 20–100 mm long. **Inflorescence** 80–200 mm, lowest internode 20–160 mm long, lowest bract sheath 10–20 mm long. **Spikes** 4–6–(8), terminal spike male, 10–20 mm long; slender, on a peduncle up to 10 mm long or sessile, remainder female, lowest 10–15 mm, upper shorter, 4 mm wide, cylindric, sessile or the lowest on peduncles up to 10 mm long. **Glumes** equalling the utricles, oblong, obtuse to subacute to shortly acuminate, pale to red brown with abroad hyaline margin, and a pale midrib not reaching the margin or prolonged as a 0.2 mm or less mucro. **Utricles** 2–2.5 × 1.3–1.8 mm, ovoid ellipsoid, broadly ellipsoid to suborbicular, planoconvex or unequally biconvex, pale below, very dark brown above, smooth and glossy, margins scabrid on upper half, beak absent, crura up to 20.2 mm long, readily abraded.

SIMILAR TAXA

Very close to *Carex dipsacea* Bergg., and differing mainly by the shorter stature, more slender leaves, shorter and fewer female spikes and smaller utricles. In its extreme form it appears very distinctive but it is scarcely distinct from *C. dipsacea* and is probably better regarded, as Moore & Edgar (1970) advocated, as part of the natural range of variation exhibited by *C. dipsacea*.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, Central Volcanic Plateau from about Lake Taupo South through the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Ranges to the northern Ruahine Range (Makirikiri Tarns, Potae). It may be in the South Island.

HABITAT

Montane to alpine stream sides, lake and tarn margins, wet flushed in tussock grassland and cushion bogs.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon, range restricted sedge abundant within large parts of its geographically confined range.

GENUS

Carex



Kaimanawa Range (from a specimen collected by Nick Singers). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Kaimanawa Range (from a specimen collected by Nick Singers). Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex tahoata Hamlin

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November–December

FRUITING

November–August

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. Does well in sun or shade, and although it prefers a moist soil it will tolerate extreme drought. Some selection from the wild may be needed as the species is highly variable and some of the high altitude forms in particular, have very red foliage and dark brown (almost black) utricles which are retained in cultivation.

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](#)

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Hamlin BG. 1968. The Genus *Carex* Sect. *Echinochlaenae* Th. Holm in New Zealand: Typification, Classification and Descriptions of New Species. *Records of the Dominion Museum, Wellington* 6: 97–111.

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 by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2005). Description based on Hamlin (1968).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026