

Cyperus alternifolius subsp. flabelliformis

SYNONYMS

Cyperus flabelliformis Rottb.; *Cyperus involucratus* Rottb.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Cyperus alternifolius subsp. *flabelliformis* Kük.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Distinctive sedge with almost rounded stems up to 80 cm, with many leaves at the top of each otherwise leafless stem, underneath an open flower head with many stalked clusters of flattened green spikes.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered in many parts of North island (usually close to habitation) and also in Christchurch.

HABITAT

Margins of water bodies and in drains.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome short, stout. **Stems** to 60 cm high, stout, subterete. **Leaves** reduced to closely appressed, very pale brown basal sheaths. **Involucral bracts** many, \pm equal, to 25 cm \times 10 mm, $>$ inflorescence, tips shortly acuminate. **Inflorescence** a compound umbel; rays many, to 8 cm long. **Spikelets** in small clusters at tips of rays, \pm 4 \times 2 mm, ovoid to linear-oblong, compressed, shining. **Glumes** densely imbricate, \pm 2 mm long, ovate, obtuse, hyaline, white to light brown with green keel. **Stamens** 3. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** \pm $\frac{1}{3}$ length of glume, trigonous, ovoid-ellipsoid, brown (Healy and Edgar, 1980).

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to a small papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus* L.) and sometimes sold under that name, differing in the presence of persistent leaf-like bracts and upright flower stalks in *Cyperus alternifolius* subsp. *flabellatus*, rather than deciduous bracts and filamentous, drooping, mostly sterile flower stalks of papyrus.

FLOWERING

Summer to autumn

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow



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FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Deliberate planting or garden waste dumpings.

YEAR NATURALISED

1973

ORIGIN

Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental plant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ETYMOLOGY

cyperus: From the ancient Greek name for sedge, kypeiros

ATTRIBUTION

Prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Edgar and Healy (1980).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication.

<https://docs.niwa.co.nz/library/public/FreInSpec.pdf>

Healy AJ, Edgar E. 1980. Flora of New Zealand, Volume III. Adventive Cyperaceous, Petalous and Spathaceous Monocotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 220 p.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA. 1989. Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington, NZ. 319 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cyperus-alternifolius-subsp-flabelliformis/>