

Cyperus congestus

COMMON NAMES

purple umbrella sedge

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Tufted leafy sedge, with triangular stems with a swollen base, up to 80 cm tall, leaves arranged in threes, with a single or group of up to 7 red-purple round flowerheads, each made up of narrow flattened flower spikes, with 3 to 6 long grass-like leaves immediately under this, at the end of flower stalk.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Thickly tufted perennial. **Stems** 15–40–(80) cm high, rather robust, 3-angled, smooth, leafy and somewhat bulbous and woody at base. **Leaves** usually < stems, to 7 mm wide, flat, margins smooth below, scabrid towards tip; sheaths purple-brown, minute transverse septa evident. **Involucral bracts** 3–6, leaf-like, the lowest > inflorescence. **Inflorescence** a simple or compound umbel or reduced to a single head; rays 2–4, rather rigid, to 6 cm long. **Spikelets** numerous, 10–20 × 2 mm, narrow-linear, acute, in dense ovate or hemispherical reddish-purple spikes; rachilla with membranous wings. **Glumes** ± 3 mm long, not closely imbricate, usually tightly appressed to rachilla, oblong-elliptic, acute, many-nerved, keel green, margins deep red-purple. **Stamens** 3. **Style-branches** 3. **Nut** ± ½ length of glume, obovoid-oblong, trigonous, dark brown, apiculate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to other *Cyperus* species, distinguished from the only other species with red-purple flowers (*C. rotundus*) by the lack of rhizomes and tubers and much taller growth habit.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout the North Island and Nelson, Marlborough and Canterbury, locally common in many areas.

HABITAT

Wet areas such as the banks of rivers and streams, swamps, ditches and also a weed of drier sites such as roadsides and cropping land.

GENUS

Cyperus

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Cyperus congestus M. Vahl



Cyperus congestus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Cyperus congestus. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Summer to autumn

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

YEAR NATURALISED

1878

ORIGIN

South Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, possibly ornamental plant, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Seed dispersed by contaminated machinery.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

cyperus: From the ancient Greek name for sedge, kypeiros

NVS CODE

CYPCON

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.

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cyperus-congestus/>

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