

# Oreobolus impar

## COMMON NAME

comb sedge

## SYNONYMS

None

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Oreobolus impar Edgar

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

OREIMP

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. Confined to the Central Volcanic Plateau and adjacent main axial ranges in the North Island.

## HABITAT

Coastal to alpine (up to 1500 m a.s.l.). Mostly alpine descending to sea level only in the southern South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. A species favouring permanently damp mineral soils within the ecotone of grassland and bog or shrubland and bog.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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



Temple basin, December. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Stewart Island. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 28/01/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial sedge forming a compact whitish-green or yellowish-green mat 20–50 mm high. **Stems** densely packed. **Leaves** spreading, not obviously distichously; lamina 0.5–1.0 mm wide, channelled at the base, abruptly widening to the upper flat portion, abaxial surface rich in stomata with only the median nerve prominent, adaxial surface having no stomata except occasionally with a few present toward the apices or very near the margin, with two lateral nerves prominent and the median nerve occasionally extending towards the apex; sheath about twice the width of lamina, 5–7-nerved, without conspicuous auricles. **Mature peduncle leaves** bearing 1–3 spikelets. **Glumes** 3,  $\pm$  =, keel stiff and green, sides pale and membranous, often tinged with red. *Hypogynous scales* slightly  $\geq$  nut, very narrow-linear, white or pale brown. **Stamens** (2)–3. **Nut** slightly > 1 mm long, c. 1 mm diameter, almost flat at the apex with a large depression, obovoid, shortly but distinctly stipitate, light grey.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Closest to *O. strictus* Bergg. from which it differs by the densely packed stems; leaves with stomata only on the undersides, and by the hypogynous scales > or occasionally equal in length to the nut. From *O. pectinatus* Hook.f. it differs by its compact mat-forming rather than cushion-forming growth habit, leaves usually not distichously arranged with only the median nerve visible on the leaf undersides at the widest part of the lamina; and by the usually red-tinged glumes.

## FLOWERING

October–December

## FRUITING

November–April

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and probably from fresh seed. However, this species is best grown in a cooler climate or kept in a pot within an alpine house. it is very slow growing.

## ETYMOLOGY

**oreobolus**: Mountain clump

**impar**: Dissimilar (upper and lower leaf surface)comb-like

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

## 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.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/oreobolus-impar/>