

Oreobolus pectinatus

COMMON NAMES

comb sedge, cushion sedge, flat-leaved comb sedge

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial sedge forming dense grey-green to green cushions 10–100 mm tall. **Stems** densely packed, much branched at base, leafy. **Leaves** dark green, green to grey-green, mostly distichous; lamina 0.5–1.0 mm wide, abaxial surface convex, median nerve and two lateral nerves visible at widest part of lamina, adaxial surface channelled, only the median nerve prominent, both surfaces with abundant stomata; sheath 5–7-nerved, not lobed at apex. **Spikelets** usually solitary; mature peduncle usually > leaves. **Glumes** usually 3–(4), usually light green with broad, colourless, membranous margins, the outermost longer, leaf-like, the two inner more or less equal, membranous, the occasional fourth glume, smaller.

Hypogynous scales < nut, lanceolate, initially colourless, maturing red-brown to almost black. **Nut** slightly > 1 mm long, < 1 mm diameter, light brown or often dark brown with a triangular, pubescent depression at apex.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other endemic species *Oreobolus impar* Edgar and *O. strictus* Bergg. by the leaves which are mostly distichous; by the median nerve and 2 lateral nerves visible on the lower surface at the widest part of the leaf; and by the usually light green glumes.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT

Coastal to alpine (up to 1500 m a.s.l.). Mostly alpine descending to sea level only in the southern South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands and Campbell Islands. A common species of cushion bogs and alpine seepages and mires and also favouring poorly drained open ground. Very rarely found growing in damp peaty ground under low subalpine scrub.

GENUS

Oreobolus

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Oreobolus pectinatus Hook.f.



Oreobolus pectinatus, Hawkdun Range.
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Auckland Island. Photographer: Jane Gosden,
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SYNONYMS

Oreobolus serrulatus Col.; Oreobolus pumilio var. pectinatus (Hook.f.) C.B.Clarke

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

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.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

ETYMOLOGY

oreobolus: Mountain clump

pectinatus: Like a comb

NVS CODE

OREPEC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened [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

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

08 June 2026