

Grassy mat sedge

Carex inopinata

Grassy mat sedge is one of five threatened grassy plants included in a national recovery plan. They all grow in dry fertile sites in the eastern South Island. These places may be used for farming, quarrying or recreation and are also often of significance to Māori. Hopefully with collaboration between all those involved it will be possible to find compatible ways of managing these places. A first step towards this is helping people recognise the plants.



Immature fruit
Photo: Cathy Jones



Photo: John Barkla

About grassy mat sedge

Description:

Inconspicuous leafy, mat-forming sedge with long creeping rhizomes up to 0.5mm in diameter. Leaves grass-like, 2mm wide, to 25cm long but usually much shorter; very fine teeth on upper third of margin. Flower stems up to 6cm tall, each with a very slender spike of male flowers at the top (stem falls off once fruit is set) and 2-3 shortly-stalked female flowers at the base. Fruits 6-7mm long, red-brown when ripe, oval and pointed at one end; very low in centre of plant.



Flowers Photo: Cathy Jones



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Distinguishing features:

Fine darkish-green leaves, creeping rhizome, teeth on top third of leaf margin only, large red-brown fruits hidden at ground level.

Similar plants:

Carex breviculmis, fine hook sedges.

Distribution:

Eastern South Island from South Marlborough to Southland.

Threat Status:

Nationally endangered

Habitat:

Fertile substrates in low to moderate rainfall areas, free of recent disturbance. Low forest or shrublands with relatively open canopy and partially shaded understorey. Sometimes at the base of limestone and schist rocks, under tall shrubs .

Threats:

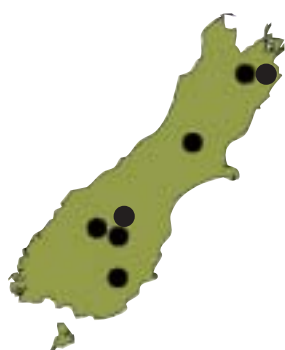
Competition with exotic grasses and other plants, loss of associated shrubs, recreational use of sites.



Photo: Cathy Jones



Photo: Ian Buunk



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