Carex strictissima

COMMON NAME
bastard grass, hook sedge

SYNONYMS
Uncinia strictissima Petrie; Uncinia rigida Petrie non Boeck., U. rubra var. rigida (Petrie) Cheeseman, U. rubra var. strictissima Kuk

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY
Carex strictissima (Kük.) K.A.Ford

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

NVS CODE
UNCSTR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
$2n = 88$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2017 │ Threatened – Nationally Endangered │ Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2012 │ Threatened – Nationally Endangered │ Qualifiers: DP
2009 │ Threatened – Nationally Endangered │ Qualifiers: DP
2004 │ Threatened – Nationally Endangered

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. In the North Island known only from the Central Volcanic Plateau. In the South Island it apparently has an easterly distribution, being recorded from the Nelson lakes, Canterbury, Otago and Southland.

HABITAT
Lowland scrub, swamps, lake margins and in damp clears within lowland forest.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACW: Facultative Wetland
Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/03/2009, Licence: CC BY.

In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/03/2009, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dark olive-green to red-green rush-like sedge, forming dense tufts. **Culms** 300–550–(700) × 1 mm, initially trigonous and scabrid but maturing as terete and smooth (except for just under the inflorescence). **Basal bracts** dull dark brown. **Leaves** much reduced, inrolled or flat, 1–2 mm wide, rigid, strongly nerved, scabrid on margins, midrib bright red. **Spikes** 30–100 mm long, subtended by a reddish filiform bract > spike. **Female flowers** 10–15, distant in longer spikes, internodes up to 14 mm long at base but decreasing to 3 mm toward apex. **Glumes** ≤ utricles, persistent, obtuse or subacute, green to light brown, tinged pink. **Utricles** 6–7.5 × 2 mm, plano-convex, nerved, light brown, often pink near apex, stipe and beak up to 15 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species perhaps most closely allied to _Carex erythrovaginata_ K.A.Ford from which it differs by the unusual, erect rush-like growth form and by the usually inrolled, (1)–2–3, 1 mm wide leaves.

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–May (as the inflorescence is long persistent, fruits may be present all year round).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Prefers cool, damp ground but once established will tolerate drought. Excellent in semi-shade.

THREATS

Herbarium specimens indicate that this was never a common species. However, it is clear that it has declined over large parts of its range, and it is now very close to extinction in the North Island. The species seems to be threatened by habitat loss as a result of weed invasion and by animal browse.

ETYMOLOGY

carex: Latin name for a species of sedge, now applied to the whole group.
strictissima: Very straight and narrow

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by Peter J. de Lange 17 August 2006. 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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Carex strictissima Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-strictissima/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-strictissima/