

Carex astonii

COMMON NAME

Aston's sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex druceana var. *astonii* (Hamlin) Edgar

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex astonii Hamlin

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CRXAST

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.60

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Gradual Decline

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North Island, where it is apparently only known from the Kaimanawa and Ruahine Ranges.

HABITAT

Montane, subalpine to alpine river terraces, back swamps and on the margins of mires.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, reddish, tufted sedge. Mature culms 100–200 mm, smooth, terete, basal sheaths grey-brown or light-brown. **Leaves** > culms, up to 350 mm long × 0.7–1.2 mm wide, plano or concavo-convex, reddish, margins scabrid, apex curled (cirrhose). **Inflorescence** of 4–6 sessile spikes, lower most distant, upper approximate; terminal spike male, rest female, these usually with male flowers at the base. **Spikes** 5–10–(150) × 3–5 mm, ovate or cylindrical. **Glumes** ≤ utricles, broadly ovate or oblong, pale brown with light red markings, emarginate, green midrib forming a short scabrid awn < 0.5 (rarely 1 mm) long. **Utricles** 2 × 1–1.3 mm, ovoid to rhomboid, usually trigonous, yellowish and red near tip, glossy, faintly ribbed, beak minute, black or red-brown, smooth, crura entire or bidentate, scabrid. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1 × 1 mm, elliptic-obovoid, trigonous, cream to dark brown.



The Bowery, Waiouru army training area, Sept 1990. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Carex druceana Hamlin (var. *druceana* in Flora of N.Z. Vol. II) has wider leaves, close packed spikelets (lower most rarely distant), glumes with awns up to 2 mm long, and utricles 2.5 × 1.3–1.5 mm. Both *C. astonii* and *C. druceana* resemble *C. petriei* in that they possess reddish, cirrhose-tipped leaves but both species lack the distinctive wide sheaths of *C. petriei*. Leaves of *C. petriei* are more rigid, the glumes more membranous, and the utricles are black except on the beak and stipe.

FLOWERING

No information available

FRUITING

No information available

LIFE CYCLE

Nuts surrounded by inflated utricles are dispersed by granivory and wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Prefers moist soils, with a sunny aspect, free from weeds.

THREATS

Rather local in its occurrences. Many of the habitats it was once recorded from in the 1950s and 1960s are now occupied by taller, faster growing weeds.

ETYMOLOGY

carex: Latin name for a species of sedge, now applied to the whole group.

astonii: After Aston

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.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-astonii/>