Carex edgariae

COMMON NAMES
Edgar's sedge

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Reddish-green to wine-red, shortly rhizomatous, tufted sedge. **Rhizome** 1–1.5 mm diameter. **Culms** 20–150 × 1 mm, cylindrical, glabrous; shorter culms almost hidden with grey-brown to light yellow-brown leaf sheaths. **Leaves** > or occasional < culms, 1–2 mm wide, concavo-convex, margins and rarely the keel scabrid toward leaf apex. **Inflorescence** of 3–6 approximate, sessile spikes; lowermost spike in well grown plants often distant; terminal spike male, glumes ovate, usually entire, creamy brown; remaining spikes female, clustered round base of male spike, 5–10 × 3–4 mm. **Glumes** for about ½ length of the utricles ovate, almost hyaline with light red-brown striations, midrib cream, scabrid at the apex, apex occasionally extended as a minute awn. **Utricles** 1.5–2.5 × 1 mm, ovoid-ellipsoid, cream at the base with red-brown to black markings on the upper half, nerves distinct in lower half, margins glabrous; beak minute up to 0.3 mm long, crura entire or minutely bidentate, finely scabrid; stipe usually minute or up to 0.5 mm long. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1 x 1 mm, dark grey-brown, obovoid, trigonous with rounded angles.

SIMILAR TAXA
Perhaps closest to *C. libera* (Kük.) Hamlin which is endemic to North West Nelson and differs most notably by the red-tipped rather than black-tipped utricles, and by the glumes of female spikelets being about the same length, rather than half the length of the utricles. The glumes of male spikelets are creamy brown and usually entire in *C. edgariae*, while those of *C. libera* are usually reddish-brown and distinctly awned.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island where confined to western Central Otago especially between Lakes Wanaka and Wakatipu.

HABITAT
A species of montane to subalpine tussock grassland where it growsin wet flushes, seepages and in damp sites near rock overhangs.

THREATS
A biologically sparse, naturally uncommon species that appears to be more under collected than it is actually threatened.

GENUS
Carex

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY
Carex edgariae Hamlin

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September–December

FRUITING
October–April

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown in a pot or sunny damp site in a garden. Tolerant of a wide range of soil types and conditions. The reddish green foliage and dark red-brown to black utricles make this a particularly attractive sedge.

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

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to indigenous and naturalised Carex in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CAREDG

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = c.60

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Sparse
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: De, DPR, DPS, DPT, NR, NS, NStr, Sp, St, TL 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.
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.

ATTRIBUTION
Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-edgariae/

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