

# Carex forsteri

## COMMON NAMES

Forster's sedge

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Large leafy tufts. **Culms** up to 0.9 m tall, 1.0–2.5 mm diameter, trigonous, smooth or occasionally slightly scabrid below inflorescence; basal sheaths dark red-brown. **Leaves** much > culms, up to 1.2 m long, 3–12 mm wide, double-folded, keel and margins scabrid. **Inflorescence** of 4–8 spikes; terminal 1–3 spikes wholly or partly male; remaining spikes female with some male flowers at the base, 25–110 × 5–11 mm, ± distant, ± pedunculate, lowest peduncles often long and slender and spikes drooping, green to grey-green. **Glumes** 2–5 mm. long, lanceolate, gradually tapering to a scabrid awn, membranous, light brown, with a narrow green midrib. **Utricles** = or slightly > glumes, 4–5 × c. 1 mm, subtrigonus, lanceolate, slightly reflexed, turgid towards the base, distinctly many-nerved, greenish brown, gradually tapering to a beak 1.5–2.0 mm long with an oblique, bifid, scabrid orifice. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1.5–2.0 mm long, trigonous, elliptic-obovoid, cream to dark brown.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from other wide-leaved carices by the absence of cross-veinlets, and long pedunculate spikes whose utricles have an oblique orifice of the utricle. Most likely to be confused with *C. cockayneana* as both grow in similar habitats (though *C. forsteri* is more common at lower elevations) and both have greenish spikes. From *C. forsteri*, *C. cockayneana* differs by the utricles which are shorter, smooth (rather than nerved) and have a shorter beak and straight rather than oblique mouth.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands. In the North Island common south of Auckland, in the South Island common in Marlborough Sounds and on Banks Peninsula, otherwise sporadic in its occurrences and not recorded from Westland or Fiordland.

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane (rarely subalpine). Usually in dense forest within high rainfall areas where it grows in wet seepages, depressions and along stream banks. A common species of karst country where it is often very conspicuous around sinkholes (tomo) and at cave entrances. Occasionally found around seepages in tall tussock grassland

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## DETAILED TAXONOMY



Porirua Scenic Reserve. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Spikelet. Porirua Scenic Reserve. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/12/2006, Licence: CC BY.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Carex forsteri Wahl.

## SYNONYMS

Carex recurva Schkuhr; Carex punctulata A.Rich.; Carex semiforsteri C.B.Clarke

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## ECOLOGY

## FLOWERING

September–November

## FRUITING

October–May

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. Excellent for a permanently damp situation in a shaded site where it does best planted within a rich soil.

## OTHER INFORMATION

## 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

CARFOR

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 60

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2024 | 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 "[Regional conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Otago](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2024) report.

Auckland: 2025 | Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR, Sp Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

### 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

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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### MORE INFORMATION

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

### PDF DATE

31 July 2025