

# Carex dipsacea

## COMMON NAMES

teasel sedge

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufts dense, harsh, 0.25–1.00 m tall, light green, dark green, red-green or orange. **Culms** 0.5–2.0 mm diameter, trigonous or subtrigonous, smooth or occasionally slightly scabrid towards inflorescence; basal sheaths dark brown, red-, yellow-, or grey-brown, nerves  $\pm$  distinct. **Leaves** numerous,  $>$  culms, 1.5–2.5 mm wide, channelled, margins closely scabrid. **Spikes** 4–8, upper approximate,  $\pm$  sessile, lower 1–3 usually more distant, shortly pedunculate, erect; terminal spike male, occasionally with female flowers intermixed, remaining spikes female, often male at base; lower spikes 10–40  $\times$  4–6 mm, upper spikes progressively smaller. **Glumes**  $\pm$  = or slightly  $<$  utricles, orbicular-ovate, obtuse, membranous, creamy brown or darker flecked, midrib light brown, 3-nerved, not reaching margin or in some glumes produced to a very short mucro. **Utricles** 2.0–2.8  $\times$  c. 1.5 mm, crowded on spike, spreading when ripe, unequally biconvex or almost plano-convex, elliptic-ovoid, yellow-brown at base, upper half with darker red-brown markings and usually scabrid margins, shining, smooth, abruptly narrowed to a small cream bifid beak c. 0.2 mm. long, margins and orifice faintly scabrid. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** slightly  $>$  1 mm long, biconvex, ellipsoid, cream at first, later very dark brown.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Carex dipsacea* superficially resembles an upright form of *C. flagellifera* Colenso or *C. testacea* Sol. ex Boott especially as three species possess channelled leaves. However the leaves of *C. dipsacea* are usually much wider, and the utricles are biconvex, only minutely beaked, and spreading widely when ripe (somewhat resembling a miniature teasel plant (*Dipsacus fulionum* L.)—hence the specific epithet). The glumes of *C. dipsacea* are  $\pm$  orbicular, and are scarcely or not awned in contrast to the distinctly awned glumes of *C. flagellifera* and *C. testacea*.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands. Widespread from about the northern Waikato South. Naturalised around Auckland City

## HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine. Favouring wetlands this species usually grows along rivers, lakes and ponds within sand dunes, tall forest, shrubland, and tussock grassland.

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## DETAILED TAXONOMY



Lake Westmere, Whanganui. Feb 2013.  
Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Female and male (top of stem) heads. Lake Westmere, Whanganui. Feb 2013.  
Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex dipsacea* Bergg.

## SYNONYMS

None

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

*Carex tahoata* Hamlin is regarded by many botanists as distinct from *C. dipsacea*. In the field it appears distinctive but as observed by Edgar in Moore & Edgar (1970) there does seem to be a gradation between it and *C. dipsacea*. As the key differences between both species are mostly size related, and no other differences seem stable, it is probably better to regard *C. tahoata* as a reduced phenotype of *C. dipsacea*. However, further research into the matter is needed.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## ECOLOGY

## FLOWERING

October–December

## FRUITING

Throughout the year

## 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 whole plants. Will tolerate most conditions, but does best in full sun in a permanently damp soil. In ideal conditions this species often naturalises, and it can at times become invasive. Along with *C. buchananii* Bergg., *C. comans* Bergg. and *C. dissita* Sol. ex Boott this is one of the most commonly cultivated indigenous sedges. This species is often sold as *C. dissita* cv. Bronze Warrior.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

## OTHER INFORMATION

## CULTIVATION

Commonly available from general plant nurseries.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**dipsacea**: Teasel-like (spikes)

## NVS CODE

CARDIP

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.74

## 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 | At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, RR, Sp

## 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 for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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### NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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### MORE INFORMATION

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

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