

Carex acicularis

COMMON NAMES

sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex inconspicua Col.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex acicularis Boott in Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARACI

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island confined to the main axial Mountains from the Raukumara Range South including the Volcanic Plateau. In the South and Stewart Islands widespread.

HABITAT

A montane to subalpine (sometimes coastal in the southern part of its range) sedge of wet open stony ground, damp seepages in scrub or forest or within tussock grassland.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



Lake Sylvester. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mount Ruapehu. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 08/02/2012, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, shortly rhizomatous, swarding yellow-green to dark green, sedge forming small tufts and mats amongst stones and in damp depressions within forest and tussock grassland. **Culms** 20–200 × 0.5 mm, terete, smooth; basal sheaths chestnut-brown or yellow-brown. **Leaves** slightly < culms (occasionally overtopping them), 0.5 mm wide, hair-like, plano-convex, canaliculated, strict, yellow-green to dark green, margins scabrid towards the obtuse apex. **Inflorescence** solitary. **Spike** 5 mm long, the lowermost glume bracteate, female flowers 2–6, equally or overtopping male flowers. **Glumes** longer than or of equal length to utricles, ovate, acute, brown with green midrib. **Utricles** 3–5 × 1 mm, lanceolate, smooth, tapering to a dark beak 1–2 mm long with distinctly scabrid margins and oblique crura; stipe 1 mm long. **Stigmas** 3. **Rhachilla** enclosed within utricle, 2–2.3 mm long, linear, margins scabrid, apex surmounted by a minute, red appendage. **Nut** 2 mm long, oblong-trigonus, smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most closely allied to *C. allanii* Hamlin (which many regard as a form of *C. acicularis*) and *C. enysii* Petrie. From *C. enysii* it is best recognised by the distinctly scabrid rather than smoothly glabrous utricle beak, while it is chiefly distinguished from *C. allanii* by its shortly creeping, closely tufted habit, lanceolate rather than subtrigonus utricles, and longer (1–2 mm vs. 1 mm) beak. The nut of *C. allanii* is < 2 mm long, obovoid-trigonus while that of *C. acicularis* is 2 mm long and oblong-trigonus. Further study is needed to determine if *C. allanii* is truly distinct from *C. acicularis*.

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

October–June

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and fresh seed. But fairly slow-growing and does better in cooler climates. Does not like humidity

ETYMOLOGY

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

acicularis: From the Latin *acicula* ‘small pin’ refers to things which are needle-like, needle-shaped, stiff or pointed

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

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

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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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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