

Carex pyrenaica var. cephalotes

COMMON NAME

mountain sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex cephalotes F.Muell.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex pyrenaica var. *cephalotes* (F.Muell.) Kük.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARPVC

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North and South Islands. In the North Island known from Mt Taranaki (Egmont/Taranaki), Ruahine and Tararua Ranges. In the South common throughout the main mountain ranges though scarce in Marlborough. Also present in Australia.

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine cushion and sphagnum bog, tarn and stream margins and damp seepages and flushes within tussock grassland and alpine herbfield.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



Mt Robert. 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

Densely tufted or cushion-forming dark green to bright glaucous green sedges arising from an ascending deeply rooted rhizome. **Culms** 10–200 × 0.5–1 mm, terete, smooth; basal sheaths light brown or grey-brown. **Leaves** numerous, usually < culms, 0.5–1.5 mm wide, involute at the base, flattened toward obtuse or subacute apex, plano-convex, margins finely scabrid. **Inflorescence** solitary, terminal, usually ebracteate. **Spike** ovoid to oblong, 5–20 × 5–10 mm, male flowers numerous overtopping the numerous females. **Glumes** mostly < utricle length, ovate, acute, caduceous to deciduous, membranous, red-brown, midrib light brown, margins hyaline. **Utricles** 2.5–5 × 1 mm, plano-convex, elliptic-lanceolate, strongly reflexed when mature, smooth, glabrous, pale yellow-brown; beak 1 mm long, red-brown, crura oblique, membranous, stipe 1 mm long or absent. **Stigmas** 2–3. **Nut** 1.5–2 mm long, oblong, smooth dimorphic; biconvex in flowers with 2 stigmas, subtrigonous in flowers with 3 stigmas.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished by the unispicate, ebracteate inflorescence this separates this carex from all except *C. capillacea* Boott from which it differs by its wider leaves, and distinctly coriaceous, shortly stipitate and longer 2.5–4.5 mm long utricles. *Carex pyrenaica* Wahlenb. var. *pyrenaica* of Europe, Asia and North America has flowers with mainly 3 stigmas and utricles with markedly longer stipes.

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–May

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from division of whole plants and from fresh seed. Does best in a pot partially submerged in water. Dislikes humidity and will not tolerate drought.

ETYMOLOGY

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

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).

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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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-pyrenaica-var-cephalotes/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-pyrenaica-var-cephalotes/>