

Carex scoparia

COMMON NAME

broom sedge

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex scoparia Willd.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARSCO

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Very dense green grass-like tufts up to 1 m tall, leaves conspicuously arranged in three planes, with slightly taller flower stem bearing pale green or yellow-brown oval heads near the tip.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout the North island, absent from most eastern areas.

HABITAT

Swamps and lake margins.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Very dense leafy tufts up to 90 cm high. **Stems** slender, sharply 3-angled, scabrid on margins below inflorescence. **Leaves** < stems, 2–3 mm wide, ± flat. **Inflorescence** 2–6 cm long, of 4–12 very clearly defined sessile spikes aggregated into an oblong or linear-oblong head; one or two lower spikes with small inconspicuous setaceous bracts < inflorescence. **Spikes** androgynous, male flowers at base, oblong or ovoid-oblong, tapering or rounded at apex. **Glumes** < utricles, lanceolate, acute, narrower than utricles at tip, light brown or white-hyaline, midrib green. **Utricles** ± 4 × 1–1.5 mm, lanceolate to narrow ovate-lanceolate, flat, faintly nerved on each side, greenish to brownish, ± narrowly winged throughout, minutely scabrid on margins of upper half, tapering to a beak ± 1 mm long. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** ovoid-oblong.

SIMILAR TAXA

Two other *Carex* spp. have oval spikes (*C. leporina* and *C. longii*). *C. scoparia* is more robust than the other species and usually has more spikes per culm (see comparison with *C. ovalis* in photo).

FLOWERING

Late spring to early summer



Carex scoparia, Howarth wetland, Te Aroha.
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Carex scoparia. Howarth wetland, Te Aroha.
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FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by contaminated machinery or waterfowl.

YEAR NATURALISED

1948

ORIGIN

North America

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Not controlled in New Zealand.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

Factsheet prepared by Paul Champion and Deborah Hofstra (NIWA). Features description from Healy and Edgar (1980).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Champion P. et al. 2020. Freshwater Invasive Species of New Zealand 2020. NIWA publication.

<https://docs.niwa.co.nz/library/public/FreInSpec.pdf>

Healy AJ, Edgar E. 1980. Flora of New Zealand, Volume III. Adventive Cyperaceous, Petalous and Spathaceous Monocotyledons. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 220 p.

Johnson PN, Brooke PA. 1989. Wetland plants in New Zealand. DSIR Field Guide, DSIR Publishing, Wellington, NZ. 319 p.

MORE INFORMATION

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