

Carex demissa

COMMON NAMES

yellow sedge

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex demissa Hornem.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARDEM

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Grass-like yellowish-green sward-forming plant, with small prickly catkins (spikes) produced along the stems in spring.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered throughout, common in high rainfall areas such as Westland and Southland.

HABITAT

Water body margins, swamps, damp waste places and low-lying areas.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufts ± dense. b variable, to 30 cm long and much > leaves, but often < leaves, erect or ± flaccid, smooth, subterete. **Leaves** 1.5–3 mm wide, channelled, dull yellow-green; ligule notched; sheaths almost white, becoming grey. **Inflorescence** of one terminal pedunculate male spike and 1–4 ± sessile, erect female spikes usually approximate at top of stem but often with a single female spike towards base of stem; subtending bracts > inflorescence, flaccid. **Male spike** to 2 cm × 2 mm; glumes light brown, ± 4 mm long, obtuse, light brown. **Female spikes** ± 1 cm × 5 mm; glumes < utricles, ovate, subacute, membranous, brown-tinged. **Utricles** ± 3 × 1 mm, glabrous, faintly nerved, inflated, yellow-green, obovoid, abruptly narrowed to a bifid beak to 1 mm long. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** obovoid, trigonous.

SIMILAR TAXA

Superficially similar to many *Carex* species with distinct male and female spikes. Perhaps closest to the related native *C. flaviformis*, distinguished by the female spike crowded beneath the male spike, not distant as with *C. demissa*).

FLOWERING

Spring



Putara, Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/01/2008, Licence: CC BY.



Eglington Valley, Fiordland. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

Summer

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by contaminated machinery or waterfowl.

YEAR NATURALISED

1907

ORIGIN

Europe, eastern Canada

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

ATTRIBUTION

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

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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>

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-demissa/>

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17 September 2024