

Carex leporina

COMMON NAME

oval sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex ovalis Gooden.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex leporina L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARLEP

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Dense pale green grass-like tufts or mat-like swards up to 1 m tall, with slightly taller flower stem bearing brown oval heads near the tip.

DISTRIBUTION

Locally common throughout New Zealand.

HABITAT

Wide variety of wet habitats from lowland to subalpine, especially disturbed habitats, but also a problem weed in short turf wetland where it can completely displace indigenous vegetation.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dense tufts; rhizome short. Stems 20–60–(120) cm tall, 3-angled, scabrid just below inflorescence. **Leaves** 1.5–3.5 mm wide, usually < stems, ± flat, ± soft, bright green, sheaths light brown. **Inflorescence** a compact ovoid head 2.5–4–(6) cm long, of 3–5–(11) approximate, sessile, light green to light brown spikes; bracts glume-like and inconspicuous or > inflorescence and ± setaceous. **Spikes** androgynous, male flowers at base. **Glumes** = or slightly < utricles, light brown with paler green to brown midrib, acute. **Utricles** 4–4.5 × ± 2 mm, ovoid, plano-convex, distinctly nerved, with winged margins almost covered by glumes, scabrid towards the tapered beak of ± 1 mm long. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** plano-convex, ± oblong.

SIMILAR TAXA

Two other *Carex* spp. have oval spikes (*C. scoparia* and *C. longii*). Both these species have glumes shorter than the utricle, so *C. leporina* spikes appear less compact (see comparison with *C. scoparia* in photo).

FLOWERING

Late spring to early summer

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green



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



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

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by contaminated machinery or waterfowl.

YEAR NATURALISED

1879

ORIGIN

Europe, Asia, North Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Unknown, seed or soil contaminant.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Can be controlled manually, mechanically or herbicidally depending on situation.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ATTRIBUTION

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-leporina/>