

# Carex ventosa

## COMMON NAME

Chatham Islands forest sedge

## SYNONYMS

Carex McClurgii Petrie

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Carex ventosa C.B.Clarke

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARVEN

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.62-64

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic, Chatham Islands where it is known from Chatham (Rekohu), Pitt, Mangere, Little Mangere, South East, Star Keys and Rabbit Islands.

## HABITAT

A widespread sedge of Chatham Island lowland forest. Not found in deep peat and mainly associated with dune forests, coastal forests and tall scrub.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Chatham Islands. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, rather leafy, shortly-rhizomatous, tussock forming sedge of forested places and well drained soils. **Rhizomes** erect, rather short, up to 20 mm wide; loosely covered in fibrous leaf-sheath remnants. **Culms** 0.45–1–(1.5) m × 1–2.5–4 mm, trigonous, mostly smooth though scabrid below inflorescence. **Basal sheaths** brown. **Leaves** ≥ culms, 5–11 mm wide, double-folded, pale green to light glaucous green, margins finely scabrid. **Inflorescence** 0.2–0.5–1 m long of 7–15 spikes, these either approximate or the lowermost 1–4 distant, occasionally compound, pedunculate; terminal 1–4 spikes male; remaining spikes female, rarely with a few male flowers near their apices, 20–45–60 × 6–8–10 mm. **Glumes** (excluding awn) ≤ utricles, ovate, acute or truncate, membranous with numerous, distinct nerves, colourless (hyaline) except for red-brown striations, and occasional larger dark red-brown markings beside the green midrib; awn scabrid up to 2 mm long. **Utricles** 4.5–5 × 1.5–2 mm, subtrigonous, ellipsoid, distinctly nerved, light greenish brown, margins quite glabrous; beak narrow bifid, c. 1 mm long, crura slightly scabrid; stipe minute. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 2 mm long, dark brown, trigonous, oblong.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Of the three other wide-leaved carices on the Chathams (*C. trifida* Cav., *C. ternaria* Boott in Hook.f., and *C. chathamica* Petrie), *C. ventosa* is perhaps most likely to be confused in the field with *C. trifida*. Ecologically, *C. trifida* is a strictly coastal species frequenting seal haulouts and seabird breeding grounds and roosts, however, in some sites it overlaps with *C. ventosa*, and in such situations rare hybrids have been recorded (these may generally be recognised by their near sterile condition). From *C. ventosa*, *C. trifida* differs in its usually much wider (6–20 mm) dark glaucous leaves, shorter, more sturdy culms and usually larger and broader spikelets (35–50 × 6–15 mm). The glumes of *C. trifida* are consistently emarginated rather than acute, ovate or truncate as in *C. ventosa*. Herbarium specimens of *C. ventosa* have been confused with the peat-bog dwelling *C. chathamica*. From that species *C. ventosa* differs by the near colourless (hyaline) rather than evenly light red-brown coloured glumes, which are of equal length rather than exceeding the length of the utricles. The utricles of *C. ventosa* are more distinctly nerved and beaked than those of *C. chathamica*.

## FLOWERING

September–January

## FRUITING

October–May

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown by division of whole plants and from fresh seed. An attractive sedge ideal for semi-shaded to shaded situations under tall trees or around buildings. Some selection is warranted as some wild populations seen have particularly glaucous foliage.

## THREATS

A common, widespread island endemic. It is not threatened on the Chatham Islands.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN 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**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Carex ventosa* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-ventosa/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

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