

Carex vulpinoidea

COMMON NAME

fox sedge

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex vulpinoidea Michaux

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARVUL

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Dense yellow-green grass-like clumps, up to 80 cm tall, leaves and stems harsh to the touch, with distinctive green to orange-brown 'bird-seed' millet like heads.

DISTRIBUTION

Scattered and locally common in Northern North Island to the central volcanic plateau, also Tasman and Westland, rare elsewhere.

HABITAT

Wet pasture and swampy waste places.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dense stiff clumps, 50–80 cm tall. **Stems** firm, erect, sharply 3-angled, harshly scabrid on angles just below inflorescence. **Leaves** usually > stems, 2–5 mm wide, ± flat, strongly scabrid; sheaths long, membranous, transversely-rugulose for 2–4 cm below mouth. **Inflorescence** a very dense, ± cylindrical, ± lobed, spiciform panicle 6–10 × ± 1 cm, green to light brown. **Spikes** numerous, sessile, very crowded above, lower ones more distant with setaceous bracts < inflorescence, male flowers at top of spikes, female flowers densely crowded. **Glumes** much < utricles, ovate with far excurrent midrib. **Utricles** 2–2.5 × 1.5 mm, ovate, plano-convex, faintly nerved on convex face, tapering to a narrow bifid beak ± 1 mm long with sparsely scabrid margins. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** almost spherical, biconvex.

SIMILAR TAXA

Only *Carex* with lobed bristly inflorescence.

FLOWERING

Late spring to early summer

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green



Carex vulpinoidea. Howarth wetland, Te Aroha. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Carex vulpinoidea. Howarth wetland, Te Aroha. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FRUITING

Summer to autumn

LIFE CYCLE

Seed dispersed by contaminated machinery or waterfowl.

YEAR NATURALISED

1940

ORIGIN

North and South America

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

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.

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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