

# Carex acicularis

## COMMON NAME

sedge

## SYNONYMS

*Carex inconspicua* Col.

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex acicularis* Boott in Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARACI

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island confined to the main axial Mountains from the Raukumara Range South including the Volcanic Plateau. In the South and Stewart Islands widespread.

## HABITAT

A montane to subalpine (sometimes coastal in the southern part of its range) sedge of wet open stony ground, damp seepages in scrub or forest or within tussock grassland.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



Lake Sylvester. January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mount Ruapehu. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 08/02/2012, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, shortly rhizomatous, swarding yellow-green to dark green, sedge forming small tufts and mats amongst stones and in damp depressions within forest and tussock grassland. **Culms** 20–200 × 0.5 mm, terete, smooth; basal sheaths chestnut-brown or yellow-brown. **Leaves** slightly < culms (occasionally overtopping them), 0.5 mm wide, hair-like, plano-convex, canaliculated, strict, yellow-green to dark green, margins scabrid towards the obtuse apex. **Inflorescence** solitary. **Spike** 5 mm long, the lowermost glume bracteate, female flowers 2–6, equally or overtopping male flowers. **Glumes** longer than or of equal length to utricles, ovate, acute, brown with green midrib. **Utricles** 3–5 × 1 mm, lanceolate, smooth, tapering to a dark beak 1–2 mm long with distinctly scabrid margins and oblique crura; stipe 1 mm long. **Stigmas** 3. **Rhachilla** enclosed within utricle, 2–2.3 mm long, linear, margins scabrid, apex surmounted by a minute, red appendage. **Nut** 2 mm long, oblong-trigonus, smooth.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Most closely allied to *C. allanii* Hamlin (which many regard as a form of *C. acicularis*) and *C. enysii* Petrie. From *C. enysii* it is best recognised by the distinctly scabrid rather than smoothly glabrous utricle beak, while it is chiefly distinguished from *C. allanii* by its shortly creeping, closely tufted habit, lanceolate rather than subtrigonus utricles, and longer (1–2 mm vs. 1 mm) beak. The nut of *C. allanii* is < 2 mm long, obovoid-trigonus while that of *C. acicularis* is 2 mm long and oblong-trigonus. Further study is needed to determine if *C. allanii* is truly distinct from *C. acicularis*.

## FLOWERING

October–December

## FRUITING

October–June

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and fresh seed. But fairly slow-growing and does better in cooler climates. Does not like humidity

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**acicularis**: From the Latin *acicula* ‘small pin’ refers to things which are needle-like, needle-shaped, stiff or pointed

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared 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

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## MORE INFORMATION

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