

Carex banksiana

COMMON NAME

fine-leaved bastard grass

SYNONYMS

Uncinia banksii Boott; *Uncinia riparia* R.Br. var. *banksii* (Boott) C.B.Clarke;
Uncinia capillaris Col.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex banksiana K.A.Ford

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

UNCBAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 88

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Te Pahi to the southern Waikato and Bay of Plenty, thence mostly in west to about Wellington), South Island (North-West Nelson, Marlborough Sounds, Canterbury and Otago).

HABITAT

Next to *Carex uncinata* Linn.f. one of the most common species of northern coastal and lowland forest and scrub.



Castle Rock, Coromandel. February.
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Glume (left) and utricle. Ecclesfield Reserve, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/02/2008, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely tufted, bright green to blue-green plants. **Culms** 100–350 mm long, much < 0.5 mm diameter, glabrous, terete; basal bracts dull reddish brown. **Leaves** 3–6 per culm, = or > culm, 0.5–1.5 mm wide, very soft, harshly scabrid on margins and upper surface towards the long filiform tip. **Spikes** 30–70 × 1–2 mm, occasionally bracteate, female flowers c. 5–10, all distant, internodes 1–10 mm. long, male glumes scarcely imbricating. **Glumes** much < utricles, deciduous, ovate or oblong, acute or acuminate, hyaline with a green midrib. **Utricles** 4.5–6 mm long, slightly < 1 mm diameter, plano-convex or terete, narrow-lanceolate or oblong, strongly nerved, rarely smooth, green to very pale brown, not spreading at maturity, distinctly contracted to a stipe 0.5–1.0 mm long, beak 1.0–1.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Very large specimens of *Carex banksiana* could be confused with *C. hamlinii* K.A.Ford, however *C. hamlinii* usually grows in cooler habitats away from the coast or at higher elevations than *C. banksiana*, and both species have yet to be found growing sympatrically. From *C. hamlinii*, *C. banksiana* differs by its smaller stature, by the glumes which are hardly overlapping and by the more distant female flowers. *C. subviridis* K.A.Ford, another fine-leaved species has a superficial resemblance to *C. banksiana*. Both species have a similar gracile growth habit, and rather fine light-green leaves and lax inflorescences. However, *Carex subviridis* is a larger plant closer set flowers, and with scabrid rather than glabrous utricles.

FLOWERING

October–November

FRUITING

November–April (but old inflorescences present throughout the year)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. Does best in a free draining soil, in a semi-shaded site.

ETYMOLOGY

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

banksiana: Named after Sir Joseph Banks, 1st Baronet, GCB, PRS (24 February 1743 - 19 June 1820) was an English naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970). Fact sheet prepared by Peter J. de Lange 17 August 2006.

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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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