

# Carex cirrhosa

## COMMON NAME

curly sedge

## SYNONYMS

*Carex cirrhosa* var. *lutescens* Kük. in Cheeseman

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex cirrhosa* Bergg.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARCIR

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 68

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: RR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, RR

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

2004 | Gradual Decline

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South Island - mainly easterly. In North Island very local from Lake Whangape (near Huntly) to Lake Wairarapa. In the South Island in scattered sites from about North Canterbury to Southland.

## HABITAT

Lake, pond and tarn margins - preferring low marginal turf in sites subjected to seasonal inundation.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



Spikelet. In cultivation. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted sedge forming dense wine red, silvery-grey or yellow-green tussocks. **Culms** 100–400 mm long, enclosed by light brown leaf sheaths. **Leaves** 25–200 × 0.5–1.0 mm, basally wine-red, apically silvery-grey, narrow-linear, concavo-convex, margins incurved, scabrid, tip strongly curled and twisted. **Inflorescence** of 2–5 spikes buried within basal portion of plant; terminal 1–2 male, lower 1–3 female crowded round base of male spikes, 3–8 × 2 mm, lower most spikes often distant, pedunculate, bracts subtending female spikes leaf-like, > spikes. **Glumes** slightly < utricles, or = to utricule length if awned, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate, cuspidate, hyaline, white or pale pink, midrib often green. **Utricles** 2.0–3.0 × 1.0–1.5 mm, plano-convex, elliptic-ovoid, yellow-green in lower half and on beak, pinkish brown otherwise, nerved, sessile, margins smooth or minutely scabrid, abruptly narrowed to an acute bidentate beak 0.5 mm, crura scabrid. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** 1.5 mm, biconvex, oblong-ovoid, brown.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the tufted, non rhizomatous growth form and by the distinctly cirrhose (curled) which are wine-red for the lower third and then silvery white for the rest of their length. The spikelets are found hidden within the foliage toward the lower third of the culm. It is perhaps closest to *C. rubicunda* which differs by its much smaller size, wider blunt-ended leaves, and smooth or faintly nerved utricles which are < 2 mm long, and narrowed to a minute 0.3 mm long beak.

## FLOWERING

October–January

## FRUITING

November–February

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and the division of whole plants. Prefers moist soils, with a sunny aspect, free from weeds.

## THREATS

Habitat loss as a consequence of taller and faster growing weeds encroaching on the lake side marginal turf communities this sedge evidently prefers. This species is also threatened by changes in lake levels and seasonal water regimes as a consequence of dams and water abstraction.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

## 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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

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