

Carex dolomitica

COMMON NAME

Mt Burnett sedge

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex dolomitica Heenan et de Lange

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARDOL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.72$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, OL

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, where it is known only from Mt Burnett. There it grows on both North and South Peaks.

HABITAT

Confined to open or exposed areas of dolomite and dolomite/limestone/marble karrenfield with little associated vegetation. Plants have also colonised the mining roads and old quarry.



At Mt Burnett, Golden Bay. Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Burnett. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/01/2001, Licence: All rights reserved.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust, tussock-forming, bronze-green sedge with channelled leaves. Leaves 200–600 × 4–8.5 mm, rigid, erect, channelled, green. **Culms** 400–850 mm long, stout, ascending or spreading, rigid, trigonous, longer than leaves when mature. **Basal sheaths** up to 60 mm long, dark brown or black, nerves distinct. **Spikes** 4–8, up to 40 mm long, erect, upper spikes approximate and sessile, lower 1–(2) spikes distant, shortly pedunculate; spikes subtended by narrow, leaf-like bracts; terminal 1–(2) spikes male; female spikes cylindrical, with three stigmas. **Glumes** 3.3–3.8 × 1.5–2.3 mm, similar length, or shorter than utricles, ovate, elliptic, chestnut brown at base, pale brown above, persistent, 2-lobed at apex, midrib green, awn 0.2–1 mm, weakly scabrid, green. **Utricles** 3.2–4.2 × 1.3–1.9 mm, glabrous, broad-ovoid to ovoid, elliptic or narrowly-elliptic, plano-convex or subtrigonus, black with a pale brown stipe and beak; beak 0.3–0.5 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Perhaps closest to *C. dallii* Kirk, from which differs in its wine red, finer (1–2 mm wide) leaves, and narrower female spikes. However, several as yet unnamed carices are closely allied to *C. dolomitica*, and further work is needed to resolve the relationships between these plants.

FLOWERING

November

FRUITING

November–September

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy to grow from divisions of whole plants and from fresh seed. An attractive, robust sedge that does well in full sun. It likes a fertile soil and can tolerate free-draining conditions and/or some waterlogging. An excellent rockery plant.

THREATS

Carex dolomitica is at serious risk from dolomite mining which is destroying its only known habitat faster than it can recolonise old mine workings. This sedge is also threatened from competition from weeds such as Mexican daisy (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) which have colonised Mt Burnett. *Carex dolomitica* is the only dolomite endemic to have successfully colonised the mine roads.

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available. Some plants are held privately and by at least one Botanic Garden.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2003. Description adapted from Heenan & de Lange (1997).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan PB, de Lange PJ. 1997. *Carex dolomitica* (Cyperaceae), a new and rare species from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35(4): 423–428. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1987.10410166>.

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-dolomitica/>