

# Carex petriei

## COMMON NAME

Petrie's sedge

## SYNONYMS

None

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

Carex petriei Cheeseman

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARPTR

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 60-62

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Densely tufted, erect to loosely spreading small red to dark wine-red tussocks; leaves cirrhose at tips. Spikes 3–6, very dark red-brown; styles 3; utricles very dark red to almost black though paler towards the apex and base.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island scarce, known only from the Moawhango area (where it may now be extinct). In the South Island throughout except, apparently, Westland. Scarce on Stewart Island/Rakiura.

## HABITAT

A species of montane to subalpine river flats, stream sides, and lake, pond and tarn margins. It may also be found in seepages within tussock grassland.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Densely tufted, erect to loosely spreading small red to dark wine-red tussocks. **Culms** 60–350 × 0.5–1 mm, glabrous, terete or flattened; basal sheaths light brown, occasionally red to reddish brown. **Leaves** usually slightly > culms, 0.5–2 mm wide, pink or greenish red, lamina narrow-linear, concavo-convex, grooved on the back, showing 2 conspicuous nerves on the upper surface, margins scabrid, apex acute, curled and twisted when dry; sheaths very wide, about 3 times width of lamina. **Spikes** 3–6, very dark red-brown, more or less approximate, though usually with the lowest more distant on stiff, erect peduncles; terminal spike male; remaining spikes female, usually with a few male flowers above, 1–30 × 3–6 mm. **Glumes** < or sometimes > utricles, rather pale brown, chartaceous-membranous becoming chaffy, margins lacerate, apex acute or with the midrib prolonged into a long scabrid awn. **Utricles** 2.5 × 1.5 mm, plano-convex, turgid, very dark red to almost black though paler towards the apex and base, sometimes light brown throughout, smooth or faintly nerved; beak slightly > 0.5 mm long, usually cream. **Stigmas** 3. **Nut** 1.5 mm long, dull brown, trigonous, oblong-obovoid.

## SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species well marked by the leaves broad sheathing base and their fine, curled and twisted apices, pale coloured glumes, and dark purplish-brown to almost black, narrow-ovoid or elliptic turgid utricles. In specimens with dark coloured utricles the bright red lateral nerves are particularly distinct. *Carex petriei* is not obviously closely allied to any of the other New Zealand species but is perhaps most similar to *C. traversii* Kirk and *C. druceana* Hamlin, species from which it is easily distinguished by the very broad bases of the leaf sheaths, and by the lowest most female spikes borne on stiffly erect peduncles.

## FLOWERING

October–January

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green

## FRUITING

October–May

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown by division of whole plants and from fresh seed. A very attractive dark red sedge ideal for a sunny damp situation in most soil types. Has proved remarkably adaptable and drought tolerant though it dislikes excessive humidity.

## ETYMOLOGY

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

**petriei**: Named after Donald Petrie (1846 -1925), Scottish born Otago botanist

## ATTRIBUTION

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.

## MORE INFORMATION

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