

Carex potens

COMMON NAME

bastard grass, hook sedge

SYNONYMS

Uncinia affinis (C.B.Clarke) Hamlin; *Uncinia riparia* R.Br. var. *affinis* Col. ex C.B.Clarke; *Uncinia purpurata* Petrie var. *subcaespitosa* Kük.

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex potens K.A.Ford,

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

UNCAFF

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 (Mt Egmont, Central Volcanic Plateau, Ruahine and Taranaki Ranges), South Island.

HABITAT

Mostly montane to alpine, rarely coastal in southern part of its range. In forests, subalpine scrub and frost flats.



Herbarium specimen: AK 30599. Photographed with permission of Auckland Institute and Museum. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stoutly erect, densely caespitose, yellow-green to dark green plants.

Culms 100.0–800.0 × 0.5–1.0 mm diameter, sharply trigonous, scabrid below inflorescence, often drooping; basal sheaths dull dark brown.

Leaves 3–4 per culm, = or slightly < culms, 1.5–2.0 mm wide, yellow-green to dark green, margins harshly scabrid, slightly involute when dry.

Spikes 50–140 mm long, female flowers c. 15–20, lax, internodes 11 mm long at base of spike, 3–6 mm long above. **Glumes** ± = or rarely much <

utricles, persistent, obtuse or lowermost subacute, coriaceous, pale brown. **Utricles** 6–7 × c. 1 mm., plano-convex, lanceolate or oblong-lanceolate, grey-brown, nerved, slightly contracted or cuneate at the base forming a stipe 1.5–2.0 mm long, beak 2 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other New Zealand species by the lax inflorescences, and utricles which are c. 1 mm diameter. It is most likely to be confused with *Carex erythrovaginata* K.A.Ford from which it differs by the leaf-sheaths, leaves and glumes which lack red colouration. *Carex potens* is very closely allied to the Australian *Carex umbricola* K.L.Wilson.

FLOWERING

October–November

FRUITING

November–January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by division of established plants. Prefers a permanently moist, peaty soil but will grow in most substrates. Best in semi-shade.

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

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.

MORE INFORMATION

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