

Carex pterocarpa

COMMON NAME

sedge

SYNONYMS

Carex thomsonii Petrie

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Carex pterocarpa Petrie

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

CARPTE

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Old Man Range (South Canterbury), Central Otago (Dunstan, Rock & Pillar Range and other nearby ranges).

HABITAT

An alpine species associated with open fellfield, cushion bog, and windswept, moist and stable rock or gravel pavements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short, squat, tufted, rather coarse-leaved sedge. **Rhizome** short, 2 mm diameter, woody, covered by fibrous leaf and leaf-sheath remnants. **Culms** 20–50 mm tall, much less than leaves in length, and almost hidden by leaf-sheaths, triquetrous, scabrid; basal sheaths grey-brown or chestnut. **Leaves** 20–60 × 1–3 mm, somewhat distichously arranged, channelled, coriaceous, margins and keel minutely though harshly scabrid, tapering to an ± acute apex; sheaths dull brown, membranous ± or equal lamina in length. **Inflorescence** an ovate, triangular, 7 × 7 mm, brownish head composed of 2–4 congested spikes, the lowermost sometimes subtended by a leaf-like bract. **Spikes** 4–6 mm long, male flowers at top of spike, rarely at base. **Glumes** ± equal utricle length, ovate, acute, membranous, midrib short, thick set, green, keel of lowermost glumes often rather scabrid. **Utricles** 3 × 2 mm, plano-convex, elliptic-ovoid, ± papillose, nerved, dark brown with pale brown conspicuous wings, margins strongly scabrid; beak narrow, 0.7–0.9 mm, crura bifid, oblique; stipe minute. **Stigmas** 2. **Nut** 1.5 mm, brown, biconvex, smooth, styles persistent.



Carex pterocarpa. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



With *Veronica thomsonii*, *Anisotome lanuginosa*; crest of Old Man Range. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 09/12/1985, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

A singular and distinctive sedge, which is only distantly allied to *C. kaloides* Petrie, *C. muelleri* Petrie, and *C. kirkii* Petrie, and has a superficial similarity to reduced states of *C. breviculmis* R.Br. In the Flora of New Zealand, Vol. II it keys out closest to *C. trachycarpa* Cheeseman, a much taller and finer-leaved sedge, which it does not even remotely resemble. The alpine habitat, short squat tufted growth habit, rather short, coarsely harsh leaves, and large (for the size of the plant) finely papillose dark brown utricles separate it from most species except perhaps *C. kirkii*, which is a larger plant, with involute rather than channelled leaves. Reduced forms of *C. breviculmis* have a superficial similarity but can be distinguished by their distinctly pubescent, pale yellow-green utricles.

FLOWERING

November–January

FRUITING

November–August

LIFE CYCLE

Winged utricles are dispersed by granivory and wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult in warm, wet or humid climates. Best grown in a small pot, kept partially submerged in water. Prefers full sun and a high fertility, free-draining soil.

THREATS

No apparent threats. A naturally uncommon species of mainly high elevation schist mountains.

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.

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-pterocarpa/>