

# Isolepis crassiuscula

## SYNONYMS

*Scirpus crassiuscula* (Hook.f.) Benth., *Scirpus crassiusculus*

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Isolepis crassiuscula* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

ISOCRA

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.64

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

.Indigenous. North Island, Central Volcanic Plateau from the upper Rangitoto Range and Kaingaroa Plain south to the northern Ruahine Range and Waiouru area. Also present in Australia and New Guinea

## HABITAT

An upper montane – alpine (700–1500 m a.s.l.) sedge of bogs, mires, pond, tarn and stream margins. Sometimes found wholly aquatic in deep pools, ponds or slow flowing streams.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



At Mangatepopo. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Ruapehu. Photographer: Mike Wilcox, Date taken: 23/02/2005, Licence: All rights reserved.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A densely tufted yellow-green to glaucous green sedge. Terrestrial plants rather dense, more or less compact tufts 60–150 mm diameter, aquatic forms forming floating mats up to 1 m long in slow flowing water. **Rhizome** much elongated, branched and rooting at nodes. **Culms** 20–200 × 1–2 mm, usually rather rigid, less so in aquatic plants, erect, very leafy. **Leaves** 40–60 × 1–1.5–(2) mm, ≤ or > than culms, narrow-linear, lamina flattened, apex subobtuse; lowermost leaf on branch bract-like with pale membranous sheath up to 6 mm wide. **Inflorescence** a very stout, solitary, pale-green, flecked with red, terminal spikelet (rarely 2 spikelets), subtending bract absent. **Spikelets** 3–10 × 2–8 mm, usually rather squat, ovoid or oblong (more usually in aquatic or partially submerged plants). **Glumes** 2–4 mm, broadly ovate, obtuse, finely nerved, centrally green otherwise red-purple to very dark red-purple towards margins, margins often a well marked as a wide hyaline band. **Hypogynous bristles** 0. **Stamens** 3. **Style-branches** 2. **Nut** 1.5 × 1 mm, grey, obovate, compressed, margins distinctly thickened, minutely apiculate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

A very distinctive sedge which is well marked from the other New Zealand *Isolepis* by its very thick set, leafy and very chunky yellow-green to glaucous green culms, and rather squat, ovoid, usually solitary terminal spikes. However, aquatic forms can be confused with *I. lenticularis* R.Br. From that species, *I. crassiuscula* can be recognised by having 3 rather than 2 stamens, and spikelets which are 2–8 rather than 1–2 mm wide. The spikes of *Isolepis lenticularis* always have a subtending bract, which is absent in *I. crassiuscula*.

## FLOWERING

November–March

## FRUITING

November–April–(May)

## LIFE CYCLE

Nuts are dispersed by water and possibly granivory and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and fresh seed. Should be planted in a permanently damp, peaty soil, or in a pot kept partially submerged. May be grown under water, and might be ideal as a fish tank plant or pond weed for an outdoor water feature.

## THREATS

A rather widespread species which can be locally abundant in parts of its central North Island range. It does not seem to be as vulnerable to weed species, such as *Juncus bulbosus* L. as some other wetland plants of this region (e.g., *Schoenus fluitans* Hook.f., *Isolepis lenticularis* R.Br.), and it may in fact not qualify for a conservation assessment in future listings.

## ETYMOLOGY

**isolepis**: From the Greek isos (equal) and lepis (scale)

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Johnson AT, Smith HA. 1986. Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.

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/isolepis-crassiuscula/>