



Carex lessoniana

Common Name(s):

Rautahi, Cutty Grass

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: North and South Islands. Widespread in the North Island. In the South Island more common in the northern half, sporadic further south.

Habitat:

Coastal to lowland (rarely montane). Usually on the margins of peat swamps, or in very wet alluvial forest.

Features*:

Rhizomatous; robust, 0.5-1.5 m tall, bright green to dark green. Culms 1.5-5.0 mm diameter, triquetrous, scabrid on the edges; basal sheaths dull brown or red-brown, margins shredding into fibres wrapped round the culm. Leaves numerous usually much > culms, 3.5-8.0 mm wide, double-folded, margins scabrid. Spikes 6-20, pendulous on filiform peduncles, or upper spikes erect, sessile; upper 3-6 spikes male, sometimes mixed with female flowers, solitary or the lower geminate, 2-4 mm diameter, glumes hardly awned; remaining spikes female, usually with male flowers at the top, geminate, ternate or occasionally quinate, lowermost spikes 20-90 × 4-7 mm, upper spikes progressively smaller. Glumes (excluding awn) < utricles, narrow-ovate, obtuse, truncate or emarginate with a hispid awn of variable length, red-brown with a light brown, 3-nerved midrib, margins narrow, hyaline. Utricles 2.6-3.8 × 1.3-2.3 mm, ovoid to oblong, saccate, inflated or unequally compressed, 6-10-nerved on each face, olive green, becoming greenish brown or red-brown, soft, margins glabrous; beak very narrow, c.0.2 mm long, orifice entire, rarely slightly bidentate. Stigmas 2. Nut c.1.5 mm long, in lower half of utricule, biconvex, orbicular-ovoid or obovoid, brown

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

December - April

Threats:

Not Threatened

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

References and further reading:

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1412



Caption: *Carex lessoniana*, Howarth wetland, Te Aroha

Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



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