



Carex chathamica

Common Name(s):

Chatham Sedge

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. Chatham Islands where present on Chatham (Rekohu), Pitt, and South East Islands.

Habitat:

Predominantly found in peaty ground such as bogs, in wet clearings, at the margins of streams, lakes and ponds, and in swamps.

Features*:

Rhizomatous, short-creeping, stoutly tufted, dark green to orange green, leafy sedge of peat bogs and swampy ground. Rhizomes woody up to 10 mm thick, loosely covered in fibrous brownish-grey sheath remnants. Culms 0.05-0.35-1 m x 1.5-3-6 mm. trigonous, smooth, stout and sturdy; basal sheaths light- to chestnut brown. Leaves not overtopping inflorescence, 6-8-10 mm wide, dark green to light green above, paler beneath, double-folded, margins slightly thickened, distinctly though finely serrate, especially toward the tapering apex; base of leaf neither sheathing or enlarged but marked by a distinct purple ligule. Inflorescence of 6-8(-12) simply, light brown spikes; uppermost 2-4 spikes male, these shorter and more slender than the female, more or less approximate; remaining spikes female with a few males near apices, 30-75(-90) x 10-15(-20) mm, erect on stout peduncles, both spikes and peduncles reducing in size toward distal end of inflorescence; subtending bracts leafy, > inflorescence, almost enclosing the peduncles with their sheaths. Glumes > utricles, linear-lanceolate, emarginated or entire, faintly nerved, membranous, light brown to dark brown or red purple (sometimes almost black), paler towards the margins, midrib pale brown prolonged as a long hispid awn. Utricles 3-4.5 x 2 mm, unequally biconvex, obovoid, turgid, pale green to brownish green, lateral nerves well-marked, otherwise smooth, margins glabrous, abruptly contracted to a narrow, deeply bidentate beak, slightly > 0.5 mm long, crura finely scabrid; stipe 0.5 mm long, white. Stigmas 3. Nut 2 mm long, pale grey-brown, trigonous, oblong-obovoid.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

November - March

Threats:

A biologically sparse species that is widespread, though never abundant on the Chatham Islands. In some places it is threatened by grazing and disturbance by stock and feral pigs.

***Attribution:**

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=232



Caption: Chatham Islands

Photographer: Peter de Lange



Caption: *Carex chathamica*

Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft