



Carex fretalis

Common Name(s):

Curly Sedge

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. South Island, Southland (Foveaux Strait area, Bluff Hill, Centre Island) and Stewart Island. Naturalised in Tasmania (where it is erroneously known as *C. comans* Bergg.)

Habitat:

A coastal species of relatively, exposed, open, damp, peaty ground, often overlying beach gravels. At Bluff Hill it has invaded surrounding pasture and is locally common along the track sides leading to the summit. On Stewart Island it often grows along tracks sides within the coastal portions of their routes, and is said to spread aggressively following fires or in heavily grazed areas.

Features*:

Stiffly erect, tufted light yellow-green sedge with distinctly much curled and twisted leaf apices. Culms 100-150 x 0.5 mm, terete, glabrous, often elongating at maturity and becoming somewhat pendant toward the apex; basal sheaths light brown. Leaves more or less equal, or somewhat > culms, 1 mm wide, plano-convex, margins scabrid towards the very strongly cirrhose apex. Spikes 4-7; single terminal male spike rather slender; remaining spikes female, 10-25 x 4-5 mm, more or less oblong, more or less distant, erect, the uppermost sessile or shortly pedunculate, the lowest on a slender, pendant peduncle up to 10 mm long. Glumes (excluding awn) usually slightly < or equal to utricles, ovate-acuminate, hyaline though closely dotted with red brown striae, the cream midrib thickened and prolonged to an awn as long as glume or longer. Utricles 3.5 x 1 mm, plano-convex, ovoid, turgid, buff brown to tawny-yellow or tan, usually with distinctly paler nerves; scarcely narrowed to a glabrous beak, crura conspicuous, sometimes scabrid on margins; stipe relatively thick, 0.5 mm long, pale brown. Stigmas 3. Nut 1.5 mm, dark grey, trigonous, oblong-obovoid.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

October - August

Threats:

Not Threatened. *Carex fretalis* is perhaps least common in the Southland part of its range but it is abundant over large parts of Stewart Island. There is no documented evidence of decline, and the species is listed only because of its naturally restricted area of occupancy.

***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

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