



Carex inopinata

Common Name(s):

grassy mat sedge

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:

Endemic. Eastern South Island from the upper Awatere River to Deep Creek and Tapanui, Southland.

Habitat:

Carex inopinata has been found in several different habitats, unified by their high fertility. These include riparian alluvial terraces under rohutu (*Lophomyrtus obcordata* (Raoul) Burret) forest, limestone and schist overhangs, and at a forest margin on a rubbly slope under shrubland. Occasional plants have been found at the base of limestone and schist rocks.

Features*:

Rhizomatous, widely creeping sedge forming diffuse mats. Rhizomes 0.5-0.8 mm diameter, bearing widely spaced, tufted, leafy culms up to 10 mm long; basal culm sheaths dull brown. Leaves grass-like, > culms up to 100 x 1 mm, dark green, channelled, margins distinctly scabrid toward apex. Inflorescence of 2-3 pedunculate spikes; terminal spike male, slender; 1-2 lower spikes female, 5-7-flowered; bracts subtending inflorescence, numerous, leaf-like. Glumes more or less equal to or just < utricles, ovate-lanceolate, papery membranous, often streaked with red, midrib extending into ascabrid awn. utricle 6-7 mm, biconvex, ovate-lanceolate, basally light brown, grading to dark red-brown towards apex, nerves distinct, these light brown; beak very narrow, 3 mm long, deeply bifid, crura spreading, margins and orifice scabrid. Stigmas 3. Nut 2 mm, trigonous with distinctive rounded angles, oblong, grey-brown to brown.

Flowering:

October to January

Fruiting:

November to February

Threats:

The diminutive stature and open, diffuse mat-forming habit increase this species vulnerability to introduced weeds. This species is intolerant of much competition from other taller or faster growing plants which is possibly why it favours semi-shaded situations. Some populations are threatened through recreational activities such as rock climbing.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (31 August 2006): Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970) - see also de Lange et al. (2010).

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

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* 11: 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=54



Caption: Alexandra
Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Alexandra
Photographer: John Barkla