



Carex auceps

Common Name(s):

Chatham Island bastard grass

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Declining

Distribution:

Endemic. Chatham Islands (Rekohu, Rangiauria, Rangatira)

Habitat:

Coastal to lowland forest

Features*:

Large, caespitose plants, with shortly spreading, erect rhizomes. Mature culms (0.8–)1.2–2.0 m long, (0.6–)0.8–1.0 mm wide, glabrous, trigonous, greatly exceeding leaves, trailing; leaf sheaths up to 60 mm long, dark brown, prominently and deeply nerved, nerves concolorous with sheath. Leaves 4–12 per culm, 0.48–83 mm long, 4.3–6.2 mm wide, deeply channelled, upright to spreading, curved, dark green; adaxial surface scabrid in distal portion, otherwise glabrous; abaxial surface keeled, keel ± scabrid, often diffusely so, sometimes nearly glabrous, rest of surface glabrous margin scabrid, apex acute, trigonous, scabrid. Spikes 90–400 mm long, 3–6 mm wide, linear, often curved and twisted; female florets proximal, 80–420 per spike; internodes up to 7 mm long at base, decreasing to 0.4 mm long (or sometimes less) above; male florets distal, 60–100 or more, imbricate. Spike sometimes subtended by a foliose bract; bract 90–112 mm long, 0.2–1.2 mm wide, capillary, channeled, margins and abaxial midrib scabrid, apex trigonous. Glumes persistent. Male glumes, imbricate, 3.0–5.1 mm long, 1.0–1.8 mm wide, lanceolate, elliptic-lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, dark to light lustrous brown at maturity, midrib prominent, stramineous, with 1 central nerve, apex acute, margins membranous, entire, apices sometimes scabrid to ± lacerate. Filaments 3.6–5.0 mm long, pale brown; anthers, 1.2–1.8 mm long, yellow. Female glumes 3.4–5.3 mm long, 1.0–2.0 mm wide, ± equal in length to utricles, elliptic-lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, dark to light lustrous brown at maturity, midrib prominent, with 1 central nerve, usually concolorous with rest of glume, sometimes stramineous, especially at distal portion of spike, apex acute to subacute, margins membranous, entire; lowest 1–2 glumes sometimes bearing foliose, slender (almost capillary), filiform awns up to 60 mm long, these mostly entire except for scabrid upper abaxial midrib and apex, apex trigonous. Utricles scarcely spreading when ripe, 4.8–5.3 mm long, 1.2–1.4 mm wide, plano-convex to convex, ovoid, glabrous, lustrous brown to dark brown, lateral nerves ± prominent, though not conspicuous, stipe and beak narrow, each 1.0–1.5 mm long; rachilla 7.0–9.2 mm long. Nuts 2.2–2.4 mm long, 1.0–1.2 mm wide, ovoid, light grey to silvery grey, papillate.

Flowering:

August - October

Fruiting:

January - November

Threats:

Although widespread and common in forested areas on the main islands of the Chatham group, the species is only secure within reserved areas. Outside reserves, as forest remnants degrade conditions for the *Carex auceps* become suboptimal and if this continues then overtime *Uncinia auceps* will become less common. Already this is happening in the northern part of Rekohu (Chatham Island) and over much of Rangiauria (Pitt Island). It is for this reason that *Carex auceps* has been listed as Declining.

*Attribution:

P.J. de Lange (14 August 2013). Description from de Lange et al. (2013).

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Rolfe, J.R. 2013: *Uncinia auceps*(Cyperaceae): a new endemic hooked sedge for the Chatham Islands. *Phytotaxa* 104 (1): 12–20. doi: [10.11646/phytotaxa.104.12](https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.104.12)

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=7594



Caption: Tuku Nature Reserve, Chatham Island. Jun 2009.

Photographer: Peter Heenan



Caption: Nikau Bush, Chatham Island. Jun 2009.

Photographer: Peter Heenan