

Carex tasmanica



Images by Richard Schahinger

FAMILY: CYPERACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Carex tasmanica* Kük.,
Bull. Herb. Boissier 4: 59 (1904)

COMMON NAME: Curly sedge

COMMONWEALTH STATUS (EPBC Act):
delisted on 5 May 2016

TASMANIAN STATUS (TSP Act): not listed

Description

Carex tasmanica is a tufted perennial with stout felted roots. Its flowering stems (culms) are bluntly trigonous and smooth; they are shorter than the leaves but exceed them in the fruiting stage. Leaves are borne from the base of the culms and just above, the blades up to 40 cm long by 2 mm wide, leathery, flat or somewhat inrolled, narrowly channelled and tapered into a blunt or rounded point, the distal portion coiling as it dries (see image above). The inflorescence consists of 3 to 6 spikes: the uppermost spikes are stalked and male, the others mostly female. Male spikes are narrow-cylindrical and about 3.5 cm long, female spikes oblong-cylindrical and 2.5 to 3 cm long. The bracts (glumes) that enclose the spikes are broadly ovate, 2.5 to 3 mm long; they have membranous margins and are either transparent or light cinnamon-brown with faint cream veins. The fruit (nut) is enclosed within a leathery sac (utricle); the nut is obovoid-trigonous, about 2 mm long, brownish-black under a thin waxy translucent surface. (description from Curtis & Morris 1994)

Distribution and Habitat

On mainland Australia *Carex tasmanica* occurs in Victoria (Walsh & Entwisle 1996). In Tasmania the species occurs in the Northern and Southern Midlands and the Derwent Valley, with isolated occurrences on the east coast and far south. It grows in soaks and seepage lines in a range of grassland and grassy woodland communities, but may also be found in disturbed areas in wet eucalypt forest and also in roadside drains. More than 100 subpopulations of *Carex tasmanica* are known in Tasmania, with at least 50 of those discovered since 2005.

Key Sites and Populations

Brighton, Cressy, Langdons Creek, Mt Rumney, Bark Hut Creek.



Carex tasmanica beside a sedgey wetland in the Northern Midlands

Known Reserves

Heathy Hills Nature Reserve, Kate Reed Nature Recreation Area, Mount Direction Conservation Area. Several subpopulations are in areas covered by conservation covenants under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

Ecology and Management

Carex tasmanica is known to respond favourably to certain levels of mechanical disturbance (such as roadside slashing and/or shallow scraping), and tends to be resistant to herbicides (Gilfedder & Kirkpatrick 1996). The species does not appear to be disadvantaged by sheep grazing, but does not tolerate cattle grazing (Gilfedder & Kirkpatrick 1996), and is capable of resprouting after fire (Gilfedder 1991). The species' narrow ecological niche means that changes to local hydrology may have an adverse impact. Regeneration is primarily through division (Gilfedder 1991).

Wind is the most likely pollination vector for this species (A. Hingston pers. comm.).

Conservation Status Assessment

Carex tasmanica was thought to be endangered in Tasmania in the late 1980s (Briggs & Leigh 1988, Kirkpatrick et al. 1988) and vulnerable in the early 1990s (Gilfedder 1991). However, in ensuing years the species was found to be more widespread than previously thought (Wells 1994, Ball 1995), and by 1994 it was not considered at risk in Tasmania (Flora Advisory Committee 1994), nor was it included on the schedules of the TSP Act when it was proclaimed in 1995. Gilfedder and Kirkpatrick (1996) argued that a vulnerable status for *Carex tasmanica* in Tasmania was still appropriate, pointing to the loss of subpopulations and the lack of formal reservation, but now consider such a status to be unwarranted (Gilfedder 2013, pers. comm.). As noted in the current national recovery plan for *Carex tasmanica* (Carter 2010): 'Tasmanian authorities do not consider there is justification to participate in a national recovery program for the Curly Sedge', with actions in the plan referring only to Victorian populations. A reassessment of the species' eligibility for listing on the EPBC Act is thus considered appropriate.

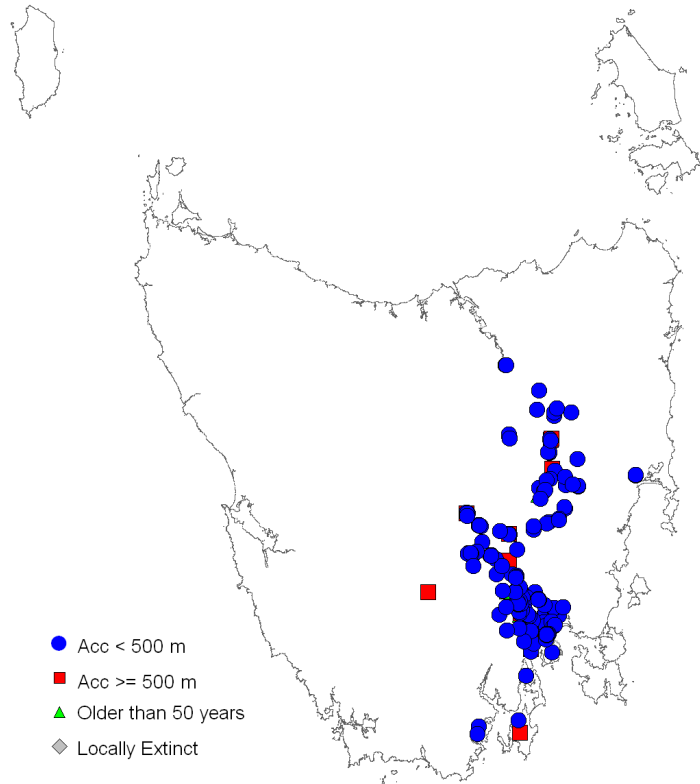
***Carex tasmanica* was delisted from the EPBC Act on 5 May 2016.**

Further Information

- Ball, P. (1995). *Carex tasmanica*: Final Report. Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania.
- Briggs, J.D. & Leigh, J.H. (1988). *Rare or Threatened Australian Plants: 1988 Revised Edition*. CSIRO Division of Plant Industry, Canberra.
- Carter, O. (2010). National Recovery Plan for the Curly Sedge *Carex tasmanica*. Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria.
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- Flora Advisory Committee (1994). Native higher plant taxa which are rare or threatened in Tasmania. Edition 1. *Species at risk, Tasmania – Flora*. Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania.
- Gilfedder, L. (1991). *Carex tasmanica Flora Recovery Plan: Management Phase*, Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage.
- Gilfedder, L. & Kirkpatrick, J.B. (1996). The distribution, ecology and management of two rare Tasmanian sedges – *Schoenus absconditus* Kuk. and *Carex tasmanica* Kuk. *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 130(1): 31–40.
- Kirkpatrick, J., Gilfedder, L. & Fensham, R. (1988). *City Parks and Cemeteries: Tasmania's Remnant Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands*. Tasmanian Conservation Trust Inc., Hobart.
- Walsh, N.G. & Entwisle, T.J. (1996). *Flora of Victoria. Volume 2*. Inkata Press, Melbourne.
- Wells, A. (1994). *Carex tasmanica*: Annual Report. Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Section records, October 2013)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Barnes Bay, Bothwell, Broadmarsh, Campbell Town, Carlton, Cawood, Cluny, Collinsvale, Conara, Cranbrook, Dennistoun, Dobson (?), Dover, Elderslie, Ellinthorp, Evandale, Faddens, Fluted Cape, Hanleth, Hastings, Hermitage, Hobart, Jacobs, Kempton, Lemont, Montacute, Morriston, New Norfolk, Nile, Oatlands, O'Connors, Prospect, Richmond, Ross, Sorell, Stanhope, Taroon, Tea Tree, Tunbridge.

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www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/threatenedspecieslists

Contact details

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Permit

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