

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES - Generalist species (typically wet places)

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
<i>Carex panicea</i> Carnation sedge	Shortly rhizomatous. Stems, smooth, loosely tufted, to 60cm, with rounded angles.	Lowest bract shorter than inflorescence , with long to medium sheath.	Leaves as long as stem x 1.5-5mm ; glaucous both sides ; rough at top, flat, tapering to trigonous tip .	Fruits in each spike few , not densely packed, bulging , almost twice as long as glumes. Male spike nearly always 1, females usually 2, sometimes 3. Fruit egg-shaped with a short beak.	Differs from: <i>C. flacca</i> by having fewer, larger fruits with gaps; the leaf-tips with 3 rounded angles in section (flat in <i>C. flacca</i>).	Bogs, wet grassy places Common
<i>Carex flacca</i> Glaucous sedge	Rhizomatous. Stems, smooth, loosely tufted, to 60cm, with rounded angles.	Lowest bract about as long as male spike .	Up to 50cm x 1.5-4mm ; flat, tapering to fine point ; green above, glaucous beneath .	Most stems have 2 male spikes, close together and often looking like one at first glance. Fruit 2-2.5 mm, roundish, with a very short beak, under 0.3 mm. Fruit densely packed on the spike, not loose and gappy like <i>C. panicea</i>	See notes for <i>C. panicea</i>	Marshes, bogs, rock pools, dry calc turf. Common
<i>Carex nigra</i> Common sedge	Very shortly rhizomatous. Stems, smooth (rough above), tufted to single, to 70cm, with rounded angles.	Lowest bract nearly as long as, or often longer than, inflorescence ; without sheath.	Up to 90cm x 1-3 mm ; thin, flat, gradual taper to a fine point ; glaucous .	Female spikes strikingly black in flower, giving a black and green chequered effect when in fruit. This species has 2 stigmas giving the fruits a more flattened/convex appearance.	Differs from: <i>C. flacca</i> , which has rounder fruits.	Bogs, fens, wet grassy places. Common
<i>Carex hirta</i> Hairy sedge	Rhizomatous or shortly so, with stems smooth, loosely tufted, 15 to 70cm, with rounded angles .	Lowest bract rarely exceeding inflorescence, with long pubescent sheath .	Hairy leaves; 10-50cm x 2-5mm ; gradual taper to fine point ; mid-green.	Utricles many ribbed ; green, hairy .	Unmistakeable as it is the only native sedge which has sheaths and leaves covered in hairs	Marshes, watersides, glens, bare trampled ground Common in coastal areas
<i>Carex ovalis</i> Oval sedge	Forms dense tufts, the stems sticking out at various angles. Stems to (40)90cm, with acute angles, rough .	Bristle-like rather than leaf-like, but lowest one usually about as long as inflorescence.	Up to 50cm x 1-3mm ; thin, soft, margins rough and flat; gradual taper to a fine trigonous point ; mid to dark green.	All spikes unstalked , close together at the top of the stem. Fruit oval, tapering to a notched beak. Stigmas 2 .	Unmistakeable species, with rounded fruits resembling a cluster of eggs.	Marshes, wet pasture, bogs, dune slacks. Frequent
<i>Carex viridula ssp oedocarpa</i> Common yellow sedge (Formerly <i>C. demissa</i>)	Stems to 40cm, usually curved ; rounded ; forms distinctive low yellow-green tufts with leaves and stems spreading out in all directions.	Reflexed , often leaf-like and flaccid . All but lowest well exceed male spike .	Leaves 5-35cm x 1.5-5mm ; rigid; recurved; sharply keeled ; usually nearly as long as stems; abrupt taper at apex.	Female spikes not or shortly stalked (close enough to touch the stem), mostly less than twice as long as broad, usually 3 altogether, the top two often almost globular and usually overlapping, the third somewhat distant. Only 1 male spike on most stems, with a stalk at least 3 mm long and sometimes up to 25 mm long. Fruit usually > 3.5 mm long including 1 mm beak. Fruit not strongly curved.	See <i>C. viridula subsp. brachrrhyncha</i> for differences. Male spike sticks out at angle	Bogs, marshes, seepages, wet coastal rock, dune slacks. Common

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES - *Coastal species

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
<i>Carex arenaria</i> Sand sedge	Very extensively rhizomatous , with stems borne singly, to 90cm (often much less), with acute angles, slightly rough .	Bracts of spikes are like glumes with a long point.	Up to 60cmx1.5-3.5mm , flat, rough, rigid, thick, often keeled or channelled . Tapering gradually to fine trigonous tip .	Shoots arranged in straight lines across the sand ; can be id'ed without flowers or fruit by this. 5-16 spikes in a rather compact cluster. Fruit yellowish-brown when ripe, winged, the upper half of the wings toothed, beak of fr c 1 mm, well-notched.	Easy to ID based on habitat and the straight lines of rhizomatous plantlets across the sand.	Sandy ground mainly near the sea, dry coastal turf Locally abundant in the North and near Castletown.
<i>Carex caryophyllae</i> Spring sedge	Shortly rhizomatous, growing in tight clumps . Stems, smooth, loosely tufted, to 30cm, with acute to rounded angles, smooth .	Lowest bract leaf- to bristle-like , with sheath 3-5mm	dark green shiny outward-curving leaves; up to 20cm x 1.5-2.5mm ; taper abruptly to short trigonous point .	One male spike above 1-3 female spikes, all crowded together and almost unstalked. Fruit downy (use 10x lens); club-shaped male spike .	The earliest sedge to flower. See notes for <i>Carex pilulifera</i>	Dry turf, mainly on the coast. Often overlooked. Local
<i>Carex extensa</i> Long-bracted sedge	Glaucous; densely tufted. Stems to 40cm; stems rounded , or vaguely triangular with rounded corners, not sharp-angled ; hairless.	Lowest two bracts extremely long, rigid; reflexed , with short sheath.	Leaves hairless; grooved; 2-3mm ; rigid; bluntly trigonous ; glaucous.	1 unstalked male spike, 2 female spikes clustered round its base and often 1 or 2 others a bit lower down. Other features: Fruit bulges then tapers to a 0.5 mm notched beak. 3 styles.	No easily confused due to specific habitat (spray zone/salt marsh). Long bracts and grey-green utricles are distinctive.	Rockpools Occasional
<i>Carex otrubae</i> False fox sedge	Stems 30-100cm, trigonous, slightly winged .	Bristle-like bract , as long as inflorescence.	Leaves 4-10mm ; keeled, with rough margins. Abrupt taper to flat sharp point; bright green .	Gives impression of fruit sticking out in all directions from a single head, rather like <i>C. echinata</i> but on a much larger scale; foxy-brown colour mixed with yellowish-green is characteristic of this sedge in late summer.	Colour and spikiness distinctive. Differs from: <i>C. echinata</i> which is smaller.	Coastal rocks, wet clayey places near the sea. Local (mainly E & S coast).
<i>Carex punctata</i> Dotted sedge	Shortly rhizomatous; stems 15-100cm, trigonous .	Lowest bract sometimes just exceeding inflorescence.	10-50cm x 2-5mm , ~as long as the stem; abrupt taper to fine tip; pale-yellow green .	Utricles project at right-angles .	Differs from <i>Carex distans</i> in stems with rounded angles.	Wet coastal rock, cliff-top bogs. Very local : central east coast (Laxey, Onchan).
<i>Carex viridula ssp pulchella</i>	See <i>C. viridula ssp. viridula</i> in 'small swamp species' for further detail					damp dune hollows in N. Local

*see Generalist species guide for additional coastal species

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES – *Heath and bog species

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
<i>Carex pilulifera</i> Pill sedge	Densely tufted. Stems, rough, to 40cm, with acute angles .	Bract of lowest female spike arises directly from stem without a sheath , rarely longer than whole inflorescence	Leaves 1.5-2mm ; a rather yellowish green , the highest usually low on the stem; papillose; abrupt taper to short trigonous tip .	1 male spike, normally 2-3 female spikes. Fruits hairy - easily seen with a 10x lens. Often very floppy. Fruit has a distinct broad stalk at base .	Can be recognized by having hairy fruits gathered in a bunch at the end of the stem Differs from: <i>C. lasiocarpa</i> which grows in very wet places and has notably long slender leaves. <i>C. caryophyllea</i> , which has a sheath and grows in tighter clumps	Dry heather moors, bogs Locally abundant
<i>Carex echinata</i> Star sedge	Stems 10-40cm; slender trigonous-rounded .	Bracts of spikes normally like a slightly lengthened glume .	1-2.5mm , thick, keeled; shiny, mid-yellow green . Gradual taper to rough trigonous tip .	Spikes about 3-4, unstalked, with fruits spreading in all directions to give star effect ; 2 stigmas . Top spike is, reversing the usual sedge arrangement, female above and male below, the other spikes are all female.	Easy ID due to 'star-shaped' spikes. Differs from: <i>C. dioica</i> & <i>C. pulicaris</i> , which have a single spike per stem. <i>C. otrubae</i> , has a similar arrangement but with far more fruits per spike and a much denser look.	Bogs, moors. Locally abundant
<i>Carex pulicaris</i> Flea sedge	Densely tufted to shortly rhizomatous. Stems to 30cm, rounded, smooth .	Spike has no bract .	Leaves less than 1 mm wide , channelled with c. 9 veins ; dark green ; blunt apex.	Has a single spike of which the top half is male and looks like a normal male sedge spike, while the lower half consists of about 3-10 well-separated female flowers/fruits, deflexed when ripe; dark brown fruit, when ripe, and 2 stigmas.	Unmistakeable for any other IoM species when ripe with deflexed fruits.	Bogs, esp in the hills. Locally frequent
<i>Carex hostiana</i> Tawny sedge	Shortly rhizomatous. Stems loosely tufted, to 65cm, with rounded angles, smooth .	Bracts of female spikes not long enough to reach stem tip; Long sheath	Leaves 2-5mm, yellowish-green (i.e not glaucous), with long terminal parallel-sided section much narrower than the rest of the leaf .	One male spike, 2-3 distantly spaced female spikes , often not much longer than broad . Female glumes dark brown with green midrib and colourless or pale brown translucent papery edges. Fruit tapers upwards into a long notched beak (depth of notch as great as its width).	Beak of fruit minutely toothed (use lens). Differs from: <i>C. binervis</i> by having >2 ribs <i>Carex distans</i> by having longer and more abruptly contracted utricle.	Base-rich flushes, bogs Rare
<i>Carex curta</i> White sedge	Shortly rhizomatous, with stems rough, loosely tufted, to 50cm, with acute angles .	All bracts small, glume-like , the lowest one extended into a bristle-point.	15-55cm x 2-3mm , soft, thin flat, tapering to fine, rough, flat tip ; pale green .	Fruit pale or blue-green with yellowish ribs . Like <i>C. ovalis</i> , has all spikes similar. Stigmas 2;	Differs from <i>C. ovalis</i> by smaller fruits and pale colour of spikes. Soft pale leaves and acute stem with pale fruiting heads are distinctive.	Bogs Very rare NW of Ballameanagh Beg, Greeba Curraghs.

*see Generalist species guide for additional heath and bog species

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES – *Tall (>1m) swamp species

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
<i>Carex rostrata</i> Bottle sedge	Rhizomatous. Stems rough ; glaucous green; slightly tufted, to 1m, with rounded angles .	Lowest bract often exceeding inflorescence , without or with short sheath.	leaves 30-120cm x 2-7mm often glaucous (bluish-green); rough, rigid, keeled. Taper to long needle like point (2-6cm) .	Spikes look like a rather narrow bottle brush. Fruits horizontal ; bottle-shaped; pale brown male glumes. Utricle faintly ribbed; yellow-green .	Differs from: <i>C. vesicaria</i> , which has the fruit ascending; darker brown male glumes; lack of spongy leaf sheaths and longer, more tapered utricle	Peaty ditches, pools, bogs, dune slacks. Common in North and Central Curraghs. Rare elsewhere.
<i>Carex vesicaria</i> Bladder sedge	Shortly rhizomatous. Stems slightly tufted, to 1.2m, with rounded angles; rough .	Lowest bract exceeding inflorescence , with short to long sheath, rarely absent.	150cm x 4-8mm; minutely serrated for entire length; gradual taper to fine point; mid or yellow green .	Utricles ribbed, shiny, olive green . Glumes narrowly lanceolate, purple-brown with pale green midrib	See notes for <i>C. rostrata</i>	Swamps Very rare
<i>Carex riparia</i> Greater pond sedge	Far creeping rhizomes; stems 60-130, rough, with acute angles .	Leaflike; exceeding inflorescence .	Up to 160cm x 6-15mm ; rigid, erect, sharply keeled; shrt taper to trigonous tip.	Can form a dominant layer in wet carr/curragh.	Differs from <i>Carex acutiformis</i> in larger spikes, glumes and utricles.	Reedswamp Very local (Lough Cranstal)
<i>Carex paniculata</i> Tussock sedge	Densely tufted, often forming large tussocks >100cm . Stems to 1.5m, with acute angles, rough .	Lowest bract of inflorescence very short , like a bristle-pointed glume.	Leaves c 3-7 mm wide; dark green , with edges rolled upwards. Leaf-edges are minutely toothed .	Inflorescence c 5-15 cm. Fruit c 3-4 mm long; Lower spikelets stalked, upper ones not; Fruit with a very broad base compared to most sedges, broadest just above base and winged in the upper half with a deep notch at tip.	The huge tussocks make a well-grown plant unmistakable. Differs from: <i>C. diandra</i> whose leaves are <2mm.	Alder-willow swamps/curragh. Rare

*Refer to generalist and short swamp species for complete list. Note: in curragh with tree canopy also consult woodland species.

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES – *Small (<1m) swamp species

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
Carex hostiana Tawny sedge	Shortly rhizomatous. Stems loosely tufted, to 65cm, with rounded angles, smooth.	Bracts of female spikes not long enough to reach stem tip; Long sheath.	Leaves 2-5mm, yellowish-green (not glaucous), with long terminal parallel-sided section much narrower than rest of leaf.	One male spike, 2-3 distantly spaced female spikes, often not much longer than broad. Female glumes dark brown with green midrib and colourless or pale brown translucent papery edges. Fruit tapers upwards into a long notched beak (depth of notch as great as its width).	Beak of fruit minutely toothed. Differs from: <i>C. binervis</i> by having >2 ribs <i>Carex distans</i> by having longer and more abruptly contracted utricle.	Base-rich flushes, bogs Rare
Carex viridula ssp viridula Dwarf yellow sedge <i>(C. serotina)</i>	Stems to 25cm (often less than 10cm), usually straight.	Lowest bract much longer than inflorescence.	Leaves usually c. as long as stems x 1.5-3mm; gradual taper to blunt tip ; yellow-grey green.	Female spikes not or shortly stalked (close enough to touch the stem), mostly less than twice as long as broad , usually all bunched together. Only 1 male spike on most stems, unstalked or with a stalk only a few mm long. Fruit < 3 mm long.	Intermediates with ssp <i>oedocarpa</i> occur, and some plants will be difficult to identify. <i>(Subsp pulchella usually smaller)</i>	Base rich flushes Very rare
Carex viridula ssp brachyrrhyncha Long-stalked yellow sedge <i>(C. lepidocarpa).</i>	Stems to 75cm, usually straight; trigonous; solid.	Leaf-like, occasionally reflexed, exceeding male spike.	Leaves yellow-green ; usually c.1/2 as long as stems x 2-3.5mm ; abruptly narrowing to blunt, rough, trigonous tip.	Ripe female spikes have fruit downturned , the fruits below the middle of the spike having their tip lower than their base, and being strongly curved. Male spike well-stalked, some of the stalks over 20 mm; female spikes normally no more than twice as long as broad. One male spike, female spikes typically 2, often just 1.	Differs from: <i>ssp oedocarpa</i> , which can have up to 4 female spikes; more upright/less tufted than <i>oedocarpa</i> .	Base-rich marshes Very rare
Carex diandra Lesser tussock sedge	Tufted but rarely forming tussocks. Stems to 60cm; slender, sharply trigonous; rough on angles.	Resembling lengthened glume.	Leaves 20-40 x 1-2mm; rough above ; flat/slight keel; gradual taper to trigonous point; grey-green.	Inflorescence consists of about 5-10 spikes grouped together; male at the top, female at base, and unstalked. Does not form huge tussocks like <i>C. paniculata</i> , may form small ones. Fruits similar in shape, but without wings.	See notes for <i>Carex paniculata</i>	Open fens Very local
Carex dioica Dioecious sedge	Shortly rhizomatous, with stems loosely tufted, to 30cm, rounded, smooth.	Lowest bract absent.	Leaves less than 1 mm wide, channelled (3 veins), shorter than stem dark green.	Each stem has a single flower-spike which is either all male or all female (the occasional mixed-sex one may be found). So at fruiting time either all glumes will have fruits or none will. Fruits spread horizontally when mature;	Unmistakeable due to single sex plants (and no bract). Be aware that 2 closely growing plant that look different may be male and female of the same species!	Fens Rare- Jurby
Carex disticha Brown sedge	Rhizomatous, stems rough , borne singly or in pairs, 20cm- 1m, sharply trigonous.	bristle-like, sometimes leaf-like and exceeding inflorescence.	Leaves 15-60cm x 2-4mm, rough on veins beneath ; thick, flat with keel; gradual taper to rough tip; mid-green.	Flowers with 2 stigma; utricles many ribbed, red-brown with serrate wings.	Prefers areas with fluctuating water table; often overlooked.	Alluvial meadows, ditches. Very local

*Refer to generalist and tall swamp species for complete list. Note: in curreagh with tree canopy also consult woodland species.

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES – Woodland/shade species

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
<i>Carex sylvatica</i> Wood sedge	Densely tufted. Stems to 70cm, with rounded angles, smooth.	Bracts generally shorter than inflorescence	3-6mm , soft, abrupt taper to fine point.	Has one male spike and 3-5 female spikes which may be male at tip. Female spikes narrow , only c 3-5 mm wide, drooping on long slender stalks, rather gappy , as if fruits missing here and there. Fruit green, shaped like a narrow bottle, beak > 1mm long, notched. Male spike broadest near tip.	Slender, drooping spikes.	Glens, typically by waterfalls. Also naturalised as a garden species. Rare
<i>Carex pendula</i> Drooping sedge	Densely tufted. Stems to 1.8m, with rounded angles, smooth.	Lowest bract usually shorter than inflorescence with long sheath.	15-20mm , rigid, thin, flat, keeled, abrupt taper to blunt point.	Drooping when ripe	Drooping heads and large size are unmistakable.	Naturalised in glens and estate grounds. Widely planted as an ornamental.
<i>Carex laevigata</i> Smooth sedge	Stems to 120 cm tall; rounded angles; smooth.	Leaf-like , not exceeding inflorescence.	Leaves wide c 7-12 mm wide; keeled below, grooved above, tapering evenly to tip.	1-2 male spikes, 2-4 remotely spaced female spikes. Female glumes pale reddish-brown with a green midrib when fresh. Fruit over 5 mm long, tapering upwards into a long deeply notched beak.	Broader leaf than most sedges. Fine red dots on utricles are distinctive (handlens)	Moist shady places esp by waterfalls Local
<i>Carex remota</i> Remote sedge	Stems 30-75, spreading, trigonous, or 2 angled towards top.	Lower bracts leaf-like, exceeding inflorescence ; upper glumaceous.	25-60 x 1.5-2mm , channelled, gradual taper to long, slender, pendulous point.	Fruits green and shiny , glumes with green midrib; 2 stigma.	Not easily confused with any other species. Remote spikes, long bracts and tussocky habitat are characteristic.	Damp shady places. Local - southern streams and damp glens.

*see Generalist species guide for additional species which may occur in open woodland situations. Swamp species may occur in wet woodland and carr.

ISLE OF MAN SEDGES – grassland/meadow species

Name	Habit	Bract	Leaf	Fruit	ID tips/similar species	IoM habitat
<i>Carex muricata</i> Subsp. <i>lamprocarpa</i> Lesser spiked sedge	Shoots densely tufted; Stems 10-85cm, stout, pentagonally to bluntly trigonous.	Glumaceous with setaceous point.	7-45cm x 2-4mm , keeled, gradual or abrupt taper to flat tip; mid-green.	Utricles 2.6-3.5(4)mm, yellowish-green then dark brown. Female glumes 3-4.5mm, somewhat shorter than utricles, pale brown later fading.	Can be confused with other spiked sedges that do not occur on IoM.	Dry banks, roadsides. Local around Castletown; spreading.
<i>Carex pallescens</i> Pale sedge	Densely tufted. Stems, rough, to 60cm, with sharply trigonous angles.	Lowest bract crimped at base , often overtopping the male spike. Sheaths hairy.	Leaves 15-50cm x 2-5mm ; soft, hairy beneath ; grad taper to fine point; mid-green.	Fruit mid-green, shiny ; uppermost female spikes crowded closely round male. Fruit elliptical in cross-section and also face-on, with very small, sometimes almost imperceptible, un-notched beak.	Utricle shape (shiny green, no beak) and crimped bract are distinctive.	Boggy meadows V rare
<i>Carex caryophyllea</i> Spring sedge	Shortly rhizomatous, growing in tight clumps. Stems, smooth , loosely tufted, to 30cm, with acute to rounded angles.	Lowest bract leaf- to bristle-like, with sheath 3-5mm	Dark green, shiny outward-curving leaves; up to 20cm x 1.5-2.5mm ; taper abruptly to short trigonous point.	One male spike above 1-3 female spikes, all crowded together and almost unstalked. Fruit downy (use 10x lens).; club-shaped male spike.	The earliest sedge to flower. See notes for <i>Carex pilulifera</i>	Dry turf, mainly on the coast. Often overlooked. Local
<i>Carex disticha</i> Brown sedge	Rhizomatous, stems rough , borne singly or in pairs, 20cm- 1m, sharply trigonous.	bristle-like , sometimes leaf-like and exceeding inflorescence.	Leaves 15-60cm x 2-4mm , rough on veins beneath ; thick, flat with keel; gradual taper to rough tip; mid-green.	Flowers with 2 stigma ; utricles many ribbed , red-brown with serrate wings.	Prefers areas with fluctuating water table; often overlooked.	Alluvial meadows, ditches. Very local

*see Generalist species guide for additional common species of grasslands