

CAREX AQUATILIS Wahl.  
Leafy Tussock Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae

SYNONYMS: *Carex aquatilis* Wahl. var. *altior* (Rydb.) Fern. *Carex substricta* (Kukenth.) Mack.

HABIT: Densely tufted perennial from an elongate, stout, scaly rootstalk; fertile culms mostly solitary, 5-10 dm.; fruiting July, August.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Somewhat similar to other members of this group, especially *Carex emoryi* and *C. stricta*. In general, *C. aquatilis* can be identified by the few fertile culms that are overtopped by numerous sterile culms and leaves; in *C. stricta* and its relatives the foliage is less luxuriant and usually shorter than the numerous fertile culms. Also, the tussocks formed by *C. aquatilis* are smaller in height and breadth than those of other related sedges. However, close examination of perigynia and of underground parts may be necessary for certain identification.

TOTAL RANGE: Circumboreal, s. to NJ, IN, IA, and NM.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Ashtabula, Erie, Lake, Logan, Lucas, Ottawa, and Williams counties. There are pre-1980 records from Auglaize, Cuyahoga, and Lorain.

HABITAT: A variety of open, wet situations, especially along lakes and streams; marshes, shores, swales; many Ohio collections are from Lake Erie shores and estuaries.

HAZARDS: Mechanical disturbance of shoreline and/or water level.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, possibly good due to its rhizomatous habit.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens with underground parts.

COMMENTS: In the past 10 years, many new populations have been found in the Lake Erie Basin. It is likely overlooked and/or misidentified because of its few fertile culms among a luxuriant growth of leaves and its extreme similarity to other tussock sedges (see Similar Species). Additional sites are likely to be found in northern Ohio, especially near Lake Erie. There are several described varieties. Our plants may be called var. *substricta* Kuk.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York. 910 pp.

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Voss, E.G. 1972. Michigan flora, Part I, Gymnosperms and monocots. Cranbrook Inst. of Sci. Bull. 55, Bloomfield Hills, MI. 488 p.



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