

CAREX ARGYRANTHA Tuckerman  
Silvery Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae.

SYNONYM: *Carex foenea* Willd., misapplied (see Comments).

HABIT: Densely tufted perennial from a short, black, fibrillose rootstalk, fertile culms 4-10 dm.; fruiting late May-July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This species is one of a series of sedges, the section Ovales, the members of which are extremely difficult to identify accurately. Species are distinguished largely by careful measurements and critical examination of the perigynia and pistillate scales. However, *C. argyrantha* usually can be identified by its large pistillate scales that almost entirely hide the mature perigynia.

TOTAL RANGE: Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to VA, w. to s. Quebec, s. Ontario, OH, and MI.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Coshocton, Geauga, Holmes, Lake, Portage and Summit counties. Pre-1980 records are from Erie County.

HABITAT: A variety of dry to moist situations in semi-shade; oak woods, aspen thickets, rock ledges, along trails, clearings, borders; often in sandy or rocky soil.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession; compaction of loose soil.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Fair, as it is known from disturbed situations.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens.

COMMENTS: The members of this group of sedges are notoriously difficult to identify. This species, though more distinct than other related sedges, can easily be overlooked and/or misidentified. It should be sought throughout the state, particularly in the northern counties. In Ohio, most populations occur on sandstone ledges and isolated rocks. For many years, the name *C. foenea* was misapplied to this species. This situation was clarified by Svenson (1938). Older herbarium specimens labeled *C. foenea* should be checked to determine accuracy of the usage of the name.

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.

Mackenzie, K.K. 1940. North American Cariceae. N.Y. Bot. Gard., pl. 194.

Svenson, H.K. 1938. *Carex foenea*, *C. straminea*, and *C. albicans* in Willdenow's herbarium. Rhodora 40: 325-331.

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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