

CAREX AUREA Nutt.  
Golden-fruited Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae

HABIT: Tufted perennial from an elongate, slender rootstalk, fertile culms 5-55 cm.; fruiting mid May-June.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Extremely similar to *Carex garberi*, from which it may be distinguished by the following characters: *C. aurea*—terminal spikelet mostly all staminate, mature perigynia deep golden-orange in color, pistillate scales acute and mostly shorter than perigynia; *C. garberi*—terminal spikelet staminate at base only, mature perigynia with a whitish and powdery appearance, pistillate scales blunt and as long as perigynia. Intergrades between these species exist. *C. aurea* superficially resembles *C. crawei* in general appearance; these species also grow in the same habitats. However the achene of *C. crawei* is three-sided, while that of *C. aurea* is 2-sided.

TOTAL RANGE: Newfoundland to AK, s. to PA, n. IN, MN, NE, NM and CA.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams, Ashtabula, Erie, Geauga, Henry, Lake, Lucas, Ottawa, Summit, and Williams counties. Pre-1980 records are from Wood County.

HABITAT: A variety of wet, open situations on calcareous or sandy substrates; wet prairies, fens, meadows, beach pools, interdunal swales.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but possibly good due to its rhizomatous habit and known occurrence in disturbed sites.

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

COMMENTS: This species is rather distinctive when mature because of the perigynia. However, these fruit are early deciduous, so the plant is easily seen only for a brief period. It should be sought throughout northern Ohio in suitable habitats.

Although intermediates have been reported between this species and *Carex garberi*, the two species in Ohio are easily separated. They have not been found growing together in our area.

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. 272.

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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