

CAREX CRYPTOLEPIS Mackenzie  
Little Yellow Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae

SYNONYMS: *Carex flava* L. var. *fertilis* Peck.

HABIT: Tufted perennial from a short, upright rootstalk, fertile culms 2-6 cm.; fruiting late May-July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Extremely similar to *Carex flava*, with which it frequently has been confused. Close examination of mature specimens is needed to accurately determine these species; the situation is confused by occasional intergrades. In general terms, the two species can be separated by the following sets of characters: *C. cryptolepis*—mature pistillate scales of yellow to pale brown, perigynia small, beak of perigynia smooth; *C. flava*—mature pistillate scales bright brown to red brown, perigynia large, beak of perigynia minutely serrulate. These two species also resemble *C. viridula* which can be distinguished from them by its very small perigynia of a bright green color and which are not or only slightly reflexed.

TOTAL RANGE: Nfld. to MN, s. to NJ, OH, and IN.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There are post-1980 records from Adams, Champaign, Erie, Greene, Henry, Lucas, Portage, and Seneca counties. There is a pre-1980 record from Wyandot County and a 19<sup>th</sup> century collection from Lake County.

HABITAT: Wet, open situations in calcareous or sandy substrates; fens, wet prairies, ditches, quarries, seepages, beach pools.

HAZARDS: Overshading by woody species as a result of succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but possibly good since it is known from disturbed sites.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens; all reports should be checked carefully.

COMMENTS: This species and *Carex flava* often have been confused with one another. When mature, *C. cryptolepis* is rather obvious, though misidentified, it is not likely to be overlooked by a competent botanist. It may be locally common in suitable habitats. It should be sought throughout glaciated Ohio.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Gleason, H.A. and Cronquist, A. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx NY. 910 pp.

Mackenzie, K.K. 1940. North American Cariceae, N.Y. Bot. Gard., pl. 356.

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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