

CAREX DECOMPOSITA Muhl.
Cypress-knee Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae

HABIT: Tufted perennial from a short, stout, blackish rootstalk, fertile culms 4-10 dm.; fruiting July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: In general appearance much like the common *Carex sparganioides*. *C. decomposita* can be distinguished by the combination of dark-colored perigynia and leaf sheaths dotted with purple; *C. sparganioides* has light green perigynia and green and white mottled leaf sheaths. *C. decomposita* also generally is found in wetter situations than *C. sparganioides*. Occasional specimens of the common *C. stipata* or *C. laevivaginata* with large, branched inflorescences might be mistaken for *C. decomposita*, but these can be distinguished by their yellow perigynia and greenish leaf sheaths.

TOTAL RANGE: NY to MI, s. to FL, and LA, very rare in the north.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from only one site in Franklin County. The species was also collected in the 19th century in Licking and Hamilton Counties.

HABITAT: Swamps, wet woods, and wooded floodplains, often in dense shade.

HAZARDS: Clearing of woods.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably poor.

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

COMMENTS: This species is known from only one site in Ohio, a buttonbush swamp in Franklin County. The species should be sought in similar habitats in central Ohio.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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

Mackenzie, K.K. 1940. North American Cariceae. N.Y. Bot. Gar., pl. 66.

Tyrrell, L.E. 1987. The rediscovery of *Carex decomposita* in Ohio. *Bartonia* 53: 15-16.

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



Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Created: 12/1981 Allison W. Cusick
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