

CAREX FLAVA L.
Yellow Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae.

HABIT: Tufted perennial from a short, upright rootstalk, fertile culms 2-8 dm.; fruiting late May-July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Extremely similar to *Carex cryptolepis*, with which it frequently has been confused. Close examination of mature specimens is needed to accurately determine these species; the situation is complicated by occasional intergrades. In general terms, the two species can be separated by the following sets of characters: *C. flava*--mature pistillate scales bright brown to red brown, perigynia large, beak of perigynium minutely serrulate; *C. cryptolepis*--mature pistillate scales yellow to pale brown, perigynia small, beak of perigynium smooth. 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: Circumboreal from n. Europe across N.A., s. to NJ, OH, and WI; two other varieties occur to the n. and e. of this range.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There are post-1980 records from Adams, Ashtabula, Champaign, Clark, Erie, Logan, Portage, Ross, and Stark counties. There is a pre-1980 record from Montgomery County.

HABITAT: Wet, open situations in calcareous substrates; wet prairies, fens, ditches.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession.

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

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens.

COMMENTS: This species and *Carex cryptolepis* often have been confused with one another. When mature, *C. flava* is rather obvious; though misidentified, it is not likely to be overlooked. It may be locally common in suitable habitats. It should be sought throughout glaciated Ohio. In other states hybrids have been reported between this species and *C. viridula*. These hybrids should be sought in 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.

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