

CAREX STRAMINEA Willd.
Straw Sedge

FAMILY: Cyperaceae.

SYNONYM: *Carex richii* (Fernald) Mackenzie

HABIT: Tufted perennial from a short, black, fibrillose rootstalk, fertile culms 6-10 dm.; fruiting June, July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The similar *Carex alata* differs from *C. straminea* by its perigynia being broadest above the middle and spikelets being only slightly clavate at the base or rounded, compared to clavate. Also the inflorescence of *C. alata* is more or less erect, and lowermost spikelets are nearly overlapping compared to flexuous inflorescence and the lower spikelets well separated for *C. straminea*. *Carex festucacea* is also similar. It differs from *C. straminea* by its perigynia being <4 mm long compared to 4.2-5.5 mm.

TOTAL RANGE: MA to D.C., w. to MI and IN, there is another variety on the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There are post-1980 collections from Ashtabula, Columbiana, Erie, Jackson, Lake, Lorain, Portage, Summit and Trumbull Counties.

HABITAT: Moist situations in shade or semi-shade; wooded floodplains, swamp woods and borders, clearings.

HAZARDS: Unknown, but possibly clearing of forest canopy.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, possibly good as it can sustain some disturbance.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens.

COMMENTS: This species is one of a series of sedges, the section Ovales, the members of which are extremely difficult to identify accurately. This species may be easily overlooked and/or misidentified. It should be sought throughout the state. For many years, the name *Carex straminea* was misapplied to other sedges. This situation was clarified by Svenson (1938). Older herbarium specimens labeled *C. straminea* should be checked to determine the accuracy of the usage of the name. Mackenzie (1940) raises the var. *straminea* to specific rank as *C. richii* (see Synonym). This treatment is not generally followed by recent authors.

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. 180.

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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