

ELEOCHARIS GENICULATA (L.) R & S.  
Caribbean Spike-rush

FAMILY: Cyperaceae

SYNONYMS: *Eleocharis caribaea* (Rottb.) S.F. Blake var. *dispar* (E.J. Hill) S.F. Blake

HABIT: Densely caespitose annual, culms 3-20 cm.; flowering and fruiting August-October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Very similar to other small, tufted spike-rushes, especially *E. obtusa* and *E. olivacea*, which grow in the same habitat. Caribbean spike-rush is distinguished by a combination of achene and leaf sheath characters. Also, *E. olivacea* is a perennial with thin stolons.

TOTAL RANGE: Pantropical, n. to SC and irregularly to Ontario, MI, and IN.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Erie and Ottawa Counties.

HABITAT: In full sun in a variety of moist, sandy or calcareous openings; shores, mudflats, temporary ponds in limestone quarries.

HAZARDS: Changes in drainage patterns; overgrowth by taller vegetation through succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens.

COMMENTS: Caribbean spike-rush seems limited to a relatively small area in the western end of Lake Erie. Population data, however, is difficult to assess since this species grows in mixed populations with other, similar spike-rushes.

This species has a long and confusing series of synonyms. Only the most frequently encountered names are listed here. Mohlenbrock (1976) includes a more comprehensive listing.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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