

MUHLENBERGIA CUSPIDATA (Nutt.) Rydb.
Plains Muhlenbergia

FAMILY: Poaceae.

HABIT: Herbaceous caespitose perennial, 2-7 dm.; flowering August-October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Members of *Muhlenbergia*, as with other species of the tribe Agrostideae, require technical characters for identification. *M. cuspidata* is, however, one of the few species of *Muhlenbergia* in Ohio with an open inflorescence.

TOTAL RANGE: Alberta to NM, e. to MI, OH, KY, and MO.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams and Montgomery counties. Pre-1980 records are from Lucas County. There is an 1892 record from Franklin County.

HABITAT: In full sun on neutral to basic substrates; prairies, dry sandy to gravelly areas, bluffs.

HAZARDS: Overshading by woody species as a result of succession. Possibly grazing, as many species of *Muhlenbergia* are important range grasses.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but presumed good due to the ready availability of seemingly suitable habitat.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material with underground parts is needed for identification. Note the density of basal tufts.

COMMENTS: Ohio is the easternmost extension of the distribution of this plains states grass. Examination of prairie areas in Ohio may add new stations.

Steyermark (1963) states that in Missouri, *M. cuspidata* frequents west- to south-facing dry limestone bluffs, often forming dense wiry clumps along the precipitous margins of the bluffs. It inhabits a similar habitat in Adams County, Ohio, but on a dolomite bluff. Examination of Ohio's limestone and dolomite bluffs may also add new stations for this species.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Hitchcock, A.S. 1951. Manual of grasses of the United States. Ed. 2, rev. by A. Chase, U.S. Dep. Agr. Misc. Publ. 200. 1051 p.

Yatskievych, G. 1999. Steyermark's Flora of Missouri. Vol. 1. The Missouri Botanical Garden Press, St. Louis Missouri. xii + 991 pp.



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