

SPOROBOLUS HETEROLEPIS (Gray) Gray  
Prairie Dropseed

FAMILY: Gramineae (Poaceae)

SYNONYM: *Sporobolus heterolepis* Gray

HABIT: Herbaceous, densely caespitose perennial, 3-10 dm.; flowering August-October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This grass forms distinctive, extremely dense tussocks. When mature, the seeds are large, round, and black, unlike any other grass in Ohio.

TOTAL RANGE: S. CT to se. PA; w. Que. to Sask., locally s. to NY, centr. OH, n. IN, IL, AR, e. TX, and WY.

STATE RANGE: Limited to the prairie soils of Ohio. There are post-1960 records from Champaign, Clark, and Madison counties. There are pre-1960 records from Franklin County.

STATE STATUS: 1980-1983: Endangered, 1984 to present: Threatened.

HABITAT: Dry to moist calcareous soils in full sun, railroad prairie remnants.

HAZARDS: Farming of the prairies has undoubtedly caused a decline of this grass in Ohio. The best stand in Ohio is on a historically unplowed site, and the grass is not found outside the undisturbed area. Another known site is in a disturbed area, but the population is not well developed.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Probably very poor, as relatively undisturbed habitat is apparently required for this grass to survive. As with many other prairie species, periodic fires may enhance its survival.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material is needed for identification. Note the basal tufts. Avoid over-collecting.

COMMENTS: This grass is very rare in Ohio due to the lack of suitable remaining habitat. Additional locations should be sought throughout Ohio's prairie peninsula.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Dore, W.G. and J. McNeill. 1980. Grasses of Ontario. Agric. Canada Monograph 26. 556 p.

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

King, C.C. 1981. Prairies of the Darby Plains in west-central Ohio. p. 108-127. In: Stuckey, R.L. and K.J. Reese, eds. The prairie peninsula - in the "shadow" of Transeau: Proc. Sixth North American Prairie Conference, Ohio Biol. Surv. Biol. Notes No. 15: 278 p.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
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