

ELEOCHARIS COMPRESSA Sullivant
Flat-stem Spikerush

FAMILY: Cyperaceae

SYNONYM: *Eleocharis elliptica* Kunth var. *compressa* (Sullivant) Drapalik & Mohlenb.

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial, 1.5-5 dm., from a thick, creeping rhizome; fruiting June, July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The strongly flattened, twisted culms usually are quite distinctive, but some specimens appear to intergrade with *E. elliptica* (see Comments). Such specimens are difficult to determine without careful examination of mature achenes.

TOTAL RANGE: Ontario to Sask., s. to GA and TX.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams, Crawford, Erie, Lucas, Marion, Ottawa, and Wood counties. Pre-1980 records are from Franklin, Lake, Ross, and Stark counties.

HABITAT: Dry to moist calcareous openings; quarries, fens, prairies, seeps; often in barren or only seasonably moist situations. *Eleocharis compressa* is the most terrestrial in habitat of any spike-rush.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession; soil compaction.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably good since it is known from disturbed sites such as quarries.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect mature, fruiting specimens with underground parts.

COMMENTS: Usually, *E. compressa* is distinctive and easily identified. However, over the major extent of its range it intergrades with *E. elliptica* and/or other members of this group of spike-rushes, the *E. tenuis* complex. Though Ohio material of this complex is relatively easy to determine, such is not the case in other states. Probably this taxon and *E. elliptica* are a part of a single, variable entity. However, the species level for *E. compressa* is maintained here pending further research.
The type locality is the Darby Plains, west of Columbus.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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