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:


Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Created: 2/1984 Allison W. Cusick