

ORYZOPSIS ASPERIFOLIA Michx.
Large-leaved Mountain-rice

FAMILY: Poaceae.

HABIT: Loosely tufted, herbaceous perennial from a short rhizome, flowering stalks 3-7 dm.; flowering May, June; fruiting June.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This is one of the most distinctive grasses in Ohio. No other grass in the state has the combination of flowering stalks with bladeless sheaths and large, evergreen, basal leaves which are glaucous above. Non-flowering tufts resemble sterile clumps of sedges and cannot be identified with certainty.

TOTAL RANGE: Newfoundland and Quebec to British Columbia, s. to PA, n. IN, SD, NM, and UT.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Highland, and Lake counties.

HABITAT: In sun or semi-shade on well-drained substrates; gravelly hills, pastures, thickets, open woods.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession; possibly grazing.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but possibly good.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect both flowering stalks and basal tufts.

COMMENTS: When in flower this is a conspicuous and easily identified species. Non-flowering material can easily be overlooked. Voss (1972) observes that most manuals incorrectly state that the basal leaves are glaucous beneath, while in truth they are glaucous above. Voss also reports occasional plants with basal leaves entirely green.

This species should be sought in suitable habitats throughout northern Ohio. It well may be more frequent than the present records indicate.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York. 910 pp.

Voss, E.G. 1972. Michigan Flora, Part I, Gymnosperms and monocots. Cranbrook Inst. of Sci. Bull. 55, Bloomfield Hills, MI. 488 p.



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