



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

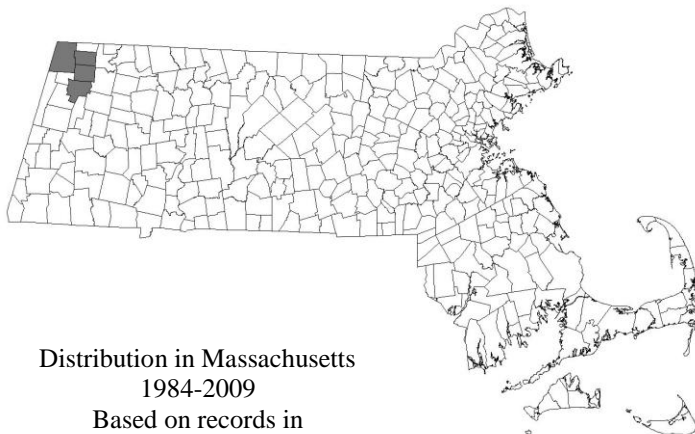
www.mass.gov/nhesp

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Hairy-fruited Sedge *Carex trichocarpa* Muhl. ex Willd.

State Status: **Special Concern**
Federal Status: **None**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Hairy-fruited Sedge is a slender, dark blue-green, grass-like plant in the Sedge family (Cyperaceae). This tall, fairly robust sedge grows in loose clumps from 6 to 12 dm (1 3/4 - 4 1/4 ft.) in height. The principal leaves are 4-8 mm (4/25 - 8/25 in.) wide and have hairless sheaths (the lowermost, stem-enveloping portions of the leaves). Each sheath is marked by a red stripe at its top. Hairy-fruited Sedge generally has three male, or staminate, spikes and from two to four female, or pistillate, spikes (clusters of stalkless flowers.) Leaf-like bracts grow out from under these spikes and overtop them. The light brown scales (small, dry, scale-like structures) of the pistillate flowers are marked with light green down the middle and are about one-half as long to as long as the sac-like structures, known as perigynia, that enclose the female reproductive parts. The 6-10 mm (6/25-10/25 in.) long, hairy perigynia are topped by a short, hairy beak (slender protuberance). Hairy-fruited Sedge's fruits mature from early June through early July.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1984-2009
Based on records in
Natural Heritage Database



Photos by Karro Frost

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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SIMILAR SPECIES: Both Schweinitz's Sedge (*Carex schweinitzii*) and Retrorse Sedge (*C. retrorsa*) have been found growing with Hairy-fruited Sedge in Massachusetts. However, unlike Hairy-fruited Sedge, Retrorse Sedge has hairless perigynia. Schweinitz's Sedge is generally much shorter than Hairy-fruited Sedge, growing only to 7 dm (2 1/3 ft.)

HABITAT: In New England, Hairy-fruited Sedge occurs in calcareous meadows and swales, especially near rivers. Massachusetts habitats include the edges of floodplain forests and swamps, wet meadows, edges of marshes and ponds and marshy swales. All these habitats are adjacent to or near a river. Plant species associated with Hairy-fruited Sedge include Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), Cattail (*Typha latifolia*), Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Retrorse Sedge (*Carex retrorsa*), and various other species of sedge (including *Carex* spp. and *Eleocharis* spp.). Schweinitz's Sedge (*Carex schweinitzii*) is a rare Massachusetts plant associated with Hairy-fruited Sedge.

RANGE: The documented range of Hairy-fruited Sedge extends from Quebec to Vermont, Ontario and Minnesota, south to Delaware, North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and southeastern Missouri.

THREATS: Reasons for the plant's rarity in Massachusetts include habitat destruction.

MATURE PERIGYNIA PRESENT:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Updated 2015

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