DESCRIPTION: This member of the Horsetail family is 4-8 inches (10-20 cm.) tall, evergreen and appears as a dark green tuft of wiry stems. Dwarf Scouring Rush has slender stems which may curve upward or lie flat along the ground and widely branching rhizomes. The stem has 3 to 4 broad and deeply concave ridges. Triangular sheaths surrounding the stems are less than an inch (3-4 mm.) long and have 3 or 4 teeth. Small (3-5mm), dark cones develop in late summer.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: Dwarf Scouring Rush is found on moist banks and seepy wooded slopes and hillsides with springs and streams: they are often in ecotones between upland and wetland sites. Dwarf Scouring-rush is known to grow in subacidic and acid glacially derived soil. Associated species often include tree elements of the Northern Hardwoods forest including Red Maple (Acer rubrum), Sugar Maple (A. saccharum), White Ash (Fraxinus americana), Eastern Hemlock (Tsuga canadensis), and Yellow Birch (Betula alleghaniensis). The hemlock provides shade and a cool climate for the plant to thrive.

Dwarf Scouring Rush: The photo on top shows a typical mass of plant stems. 
Photo: Jennifer Garrett, NHESP.
A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

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