



Maine Department of Conservation
Natural Areas Program

Carex laxiculmis Schwein.

Spreading Sedge

- Habitat:** Rich woods and glades, streambanks.
[Hardwood to mixed forest (forest, upland)]
- Range:** Southern Maine to southern Ontario, west to Wisconsin, and south to North Carolina and Tennessee.
- Phenology:** Flowers May to early July.
- Family:** Cyperaceae

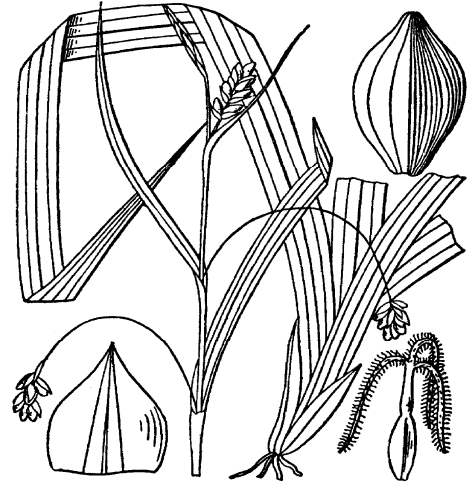


Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

Aids to Identification: Members of this genus can be difficult to identify without careful examination of microscopic features and knowledge of general groups of species. *C. laxiculmis*, in the section *Laxiflorae*, is characterized by slender culms with relatively few-flowered, long-peduncled pistillate spikes and one terminal staminate spike raised well above the pistillate ones. Achenes are sharply three-angled. The basal rosettes of leaves are glaucous or pale green. *C. laxiculmis* is closely related to several species which also occur in Maine, and more commonly: *C. digitalis*, *C. platyphylla*, and *C. plantaginea*, and it hybridizes with *C. digitalis*. *Carex laxiculmis* has leaves up to 12 mm wide and the lowest 1-3 scales of carpellate spikes empty or subtending staminate flowers.

Ecological characteristics: Little currently known about this species in Maine. The two occurrences are in hardwood forests with a red oak component.

Synonyms: Maine populations are *C. laxiculmis* var. *laxiculmis*

Rarity of *Carex laxiculmis*

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|---|
| State Rank: | S2 | Imperiled in Maine because of rarity or vulnerability to further decline. |
| New England Rank: | None | |
| Global Rank: | G5 | Demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure globally. |

Status of *Carex laxiculmis*

| | | |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Federal Status: | None | No Federal Status. |
| State Status: | Endangered | |



- ▲ Historical (before 1982)
● Recent (1982 - present)

Known Distribution in Maine:

This rare plant has been documented from a total of 4 town(s) in the following county(ies): Sagadahoc, Somerset, York.

Dates of documented observations are: 1886, 1894, 1985, 1996

Reason(s) for rarity:

At northern limit of range.

Conservation considerations:

Known populations are small, and subject to the vagaries of small populations like random fluctuations or localized disturbance events.

The information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 11 MAY 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species,
please contact the Natural Areas Program
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

