

Lesser Panicled Sedge

Carex diandra

Description

Lesser Panicled Sedge is a perennial grass-like plant with three-sided stems that may grow to 2.5 feet (0.75 m) in height. The leaves include a sheathing basal portion, which may have small scattered red dots on the ventral side,

and an elongate and narrow blade that is alternately arranged and about 1/8 inch (2-3 mm) in width. The minute flowers, which appear in spring, are scattered in alternately arranged clusters on the upper part of the stem, with the male flowers at the very top of some or all clusters and the female flowers directly below the male. The plant is most recognizable when fruiting in late spring and early summer, with the three-sided fruits being enclosed in numerous and densely crowded sac-like structures, or perigynia, which are about 1/8 inch (2.5 mm) in length, taper to a beak-like tip, and are somewhat lustrous at maturity.



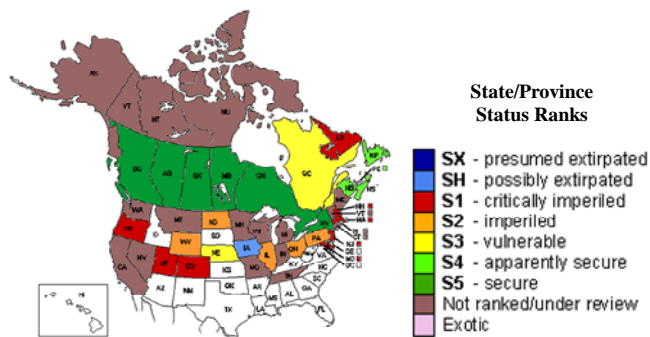
Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

Distribution & Habitat.

Lesser Panicled Sedge has a transcontinental range across the cooler regions of North America. In Pennsylvania, it is considered a northern species, and has been documented historically in the glaciated northeastern and northwestern counties. The species grows in bogs, peaty wetlands, and marshes.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2010

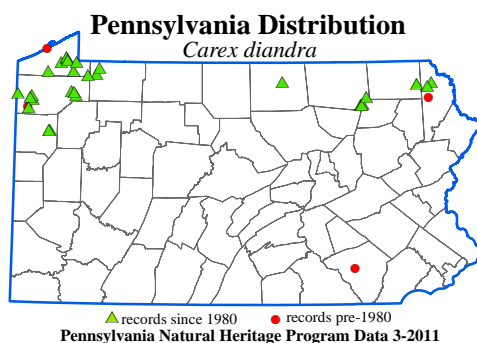


Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Lesser Panicled Sedge to be a species of special concern, based on the moderate number of locations recently confirmed and the wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Threatened.

Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Lesser Panicled Sedge and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology around wetlands and controlling invasive species.



NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S2– Imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2011. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2011.
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