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Carex sterilis Willd.

Dioecious Sedge



- State Rank: S3
- Global Rank: G4
- State Status: Special Concern

Habitat: Wet calcareous soils. [Non-tidal rivershore (non-forested, seasonally wet); Open wetland, not coastal nor rivershore (non-forested, wetland)]

Range: Newfoundland to Minnesota, south to Pennsylvania and west to Illinois.

Aids to Identification:Identification of the species of *Carex* is usually very difficult and relies on technical morphological features. *Carex sterilis* belongs to the section *Stellulate*, a group that is characterized by gynecaudrous spikes (pollen bearing flowers borne at the base of the spike), sharp margined (but not wing margined) perigynia with a thick, spongy base. *Carex sterilis* is identified by its subdioecious habit. All other members of the *Stellulate* will show reproductive stems that produce both pollen bearing flowers and ovule bearing flowers (termed monoecious). *Carex sterilis*, on the other hand, produces these two types of flowers on separate stems (though each type of plant may have a few of the other type present). Its specific epithet, *sterilis*, refers to the pollen bearing stems which will not produce seeds (i.e., sterile).

Ecological characteristics: In Maine this sedge has been found growing along gravelly rivershores (riverside seep community) and in circumneutral (calcareous) fens.



Phenology: Fruits June - August.

Family: Cyperaceae


Synonyms: *Carex elachycarpa* Fern.; *Carex muricata* L. var. *sterilis* (Fern.) Gleason; *Kobresia elachycarpa* (Fern.) Fern.

Known Distribution in Maine: This rare plant has been documented from a total of 22 town(s) in the following county(ies): Aroostook, Cumberland, Penobscot, York.

Reason(s) for rarity: Suitable calcareous habitat is scarce.

Conservation considerations: Maintain hydrologic integrity of wetland and rivershore habitat.

Credits





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http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/carxste.htm[10/23/2017 3:50:07 PM]

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