

Identification of Common Wetland Sedges of Florida

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Sedges

- Habitats: wet or dry; mostly wet
- Weeds in Agriculture, urban, and natural areas
- Dominant species in some habitats
- Valuable food source for wildlife
- FL: 17 genera and 280 species

Cyperaceae in Florida

Genus	Common Name	Taxa Count
<i>Abildgaardia</i>	FLATSPIKE SEDGE	1
<i>Bolboschoenus</i>		1
<i>Bulbostylis</i>	HAIRSEEDGE	5
<i>Carex</i>	SEEDGE	74
<i>Cladium</i>	SWAMP SAWGRASS	2
<i>Cyperus</i>	FLATSEEDGE	67
<i>Dulichium</i>	THREWAY SEDGE	1
<i>Eleocharis</i>	SPIKERUSH	32
<i>Fimbristylis</i>	FIMBRY	9
<i>Fuirena</i>	UMBRELLASEEDGE	5
<i>Isolepis</i>	BULRUSH	1
<i>Rhynchospora</i>	BEAKSEEDGE	56
<i>Schoenoplectiella</i>		1
<i>Schoenoplectus</i>	NAKED-STEMMED BULRUSH	7
<i>Schoenus</i>	BOGRUSH	1
<i>Scirpus</i>	BULRUSH	4
<i>Scleria</i>	NUTRUSH	13

Sedges, Rushes, or Grasses?

Sedges have edges, rushes are round, grasses have knees that bend to the ground.

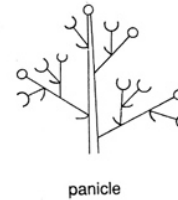
Characteristic	Sedge
Culm (Stem)	Filled with pith, rarely hollow, usually 3 sided
Nodes	Absent
Leaf Blade	Flat or pleated (V or W shaped)
Leaf Margins	Usually scabrous



Sedge ID Terminology

- Inflorescences (flowers):

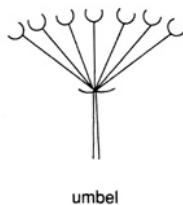
- Panicle: multi-branched inflorescence



- Spikelet: small spike with reduced flowers on a central axis



- Umbel: flower stalks arise from a common point



Sedge ID Terminology

- Subtending bracts: modified leaf arranged on plant just below the inflorescence
- Ray: branches of a compound umbel
- Achenes: small single seeded hard fruit
- Contra-ligule: membrane on the leaf sheath opposite the leaf

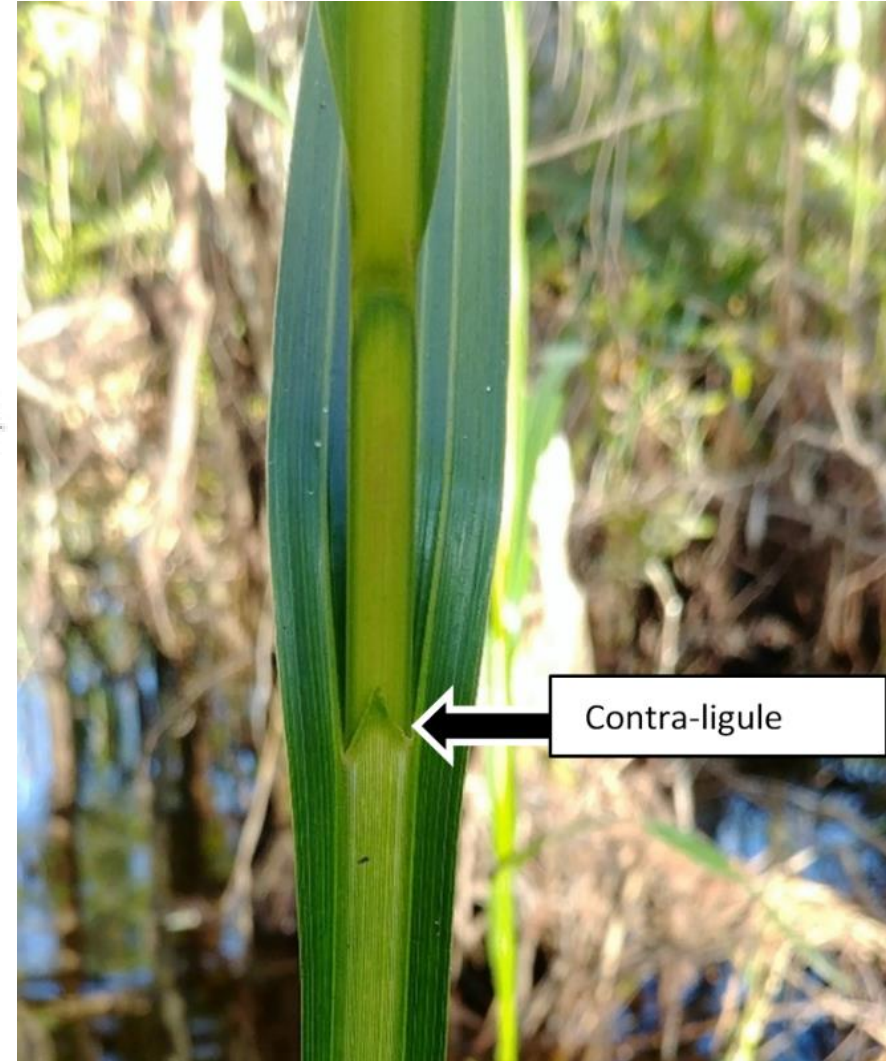
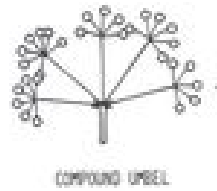


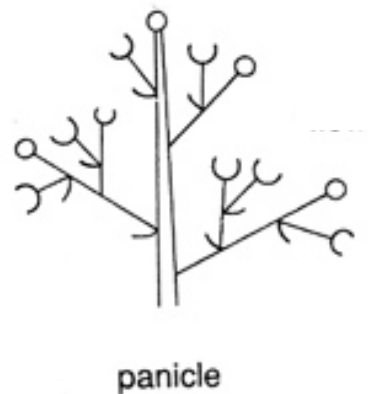
Illustration by Frank Prince

Sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*)



Sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*)

- Native
- Fresh & brackish swamps, marshes, and lakeshores
- Spreads by rhizome and seed
- Forms dense stands



Sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*)

- 3 m tall
- Stems: hollow, slightly angled
- Leaves: grey/green, saw-toothed margins
- Inflorescences: Reddish/brown, drooping
- Achenes: wrinkled, near-spherical, pointed end



Cuban Bulrush (*Cyperus blepharoleptos*)



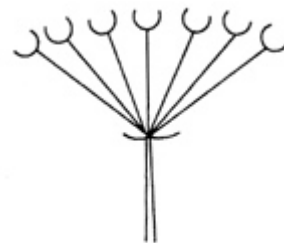
Cuban Bulrush (*Cyperus blepharoleptos*)

- Syn. *Oxycaryum cubense*, *Scirpus cubensis*
- Non native invasive
- Lakes, streams, marshes, ditches,
- Spreads vegetatively and by seeds
- Forms extensive floating mats



Cuban Bulrush (*Cyperus blepharoleptos*)

- 1 m tall
- Stems: strongly angled
- Leaves: thin, growing from base
- Inflorescences: umbel-like 1-13 heads, subtended by bracts



umbel



Haspan Flatsedge (*Cyperus haspan*)



Haspan Flatsedge (*Cyperus haspan*)

- Native
- Marshes, pond shores, moist soils, swales
- Spreads by seeds and short rhizomes



Haspan Flatsedge (*Cyperus haspan*)

- 0.7 m tall
- Stems: strongly angled
- Leaves: flat to V shaped, reduced to sheaths
- Inflorescences: 10-15 rays
- Ascending bracts at 30° -60°



Dwarf Papyrus (*Cyperus prolifer*)



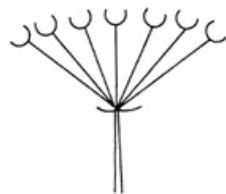
Dwarf Papyrus (*Cyperus prolifer*)

- Non native invasive
- FLEPPC: Cat II
- Lakes, ponds, marshes
- Forms floating mats
- Spreads by rhizome, seeds
- Ornamental in water gardens



Dwarf Papyrus (*Cyperus prolifer*)

- 1 m tall
- Stems: strongly angular
- Leaves: reduced to sheaths at base
- Inflorescences: 50-100 shiny rays
- Spikelets: light brown 12 mm long
- Thick rhizome



umbel



Haspan Flatsedge Vs Dwarf Papyrus

- Haspan Flatsedge – native
 - Ascending bracts at 30° -60°



- Dwarf Papyrus – non native invasive
 - Bracts are horizontal or slightly ascending



Dwarf Papyrus

Haspan Flatsedge

Papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*)



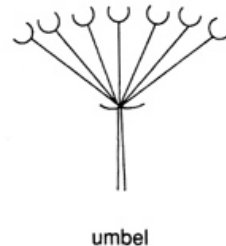
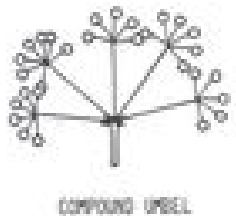
Papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*)

- Non native invasive
- Disturbed swamps with low biodiversity
- Spreads by fragments, seed, rhizome
- Use by ancient Egyptians to make paper
- Ornamental in water gardens
- Forms dense stands in native range



Papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*)

- 1- 4^{1/2} m tall
- Stems: slightly angled
- Leaves: reduced to papery sheaths, reddish brown
- Inflorescences: umbel-like, >100 thin shiny rays



Umbrella Flat Sedge (*Cyperus involucratus*)



Umbrella Flat Sedge (*Cyperus involucratus*)

- Non native invasive
- FLEPPC: Cat. II
- Wetlands, lakes, rivers
- Spreads by rhizomes, seeds, fragments
- Ornamental in water gardens, landscaped on lake shores



Umbrella Flat Sedge (*Cyperus involucratus*)

- 2 m tall
- Stems: rounded edges
- Leaves: reduced to basal sheaths
- Inflorescences: stalked spikelet clusters, subtended by 12-25 umbrella shaped bracts



Swamp Flatsedge (*Cyperus ligularis*)



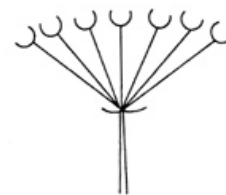
Swamp Flatsedge (*Cyperus ligularis*)

- Native
- Fresh and brackish swamps, marshes, disturbed areas
- Spread by seed
- Grows solitary or in clumps
- Not tolerant of prolonged cold



Swamp Flatsedge (*Cyperus ligularis*)

- 1.3 m tall
- Stems: thickened at base
- Leaves: 3 vertical ranks at base of stem, margins and midveins rough
- Inflorescences: 5-12 rays, 4-8 bracts up to 50 cm long
- Spikes: oblong-cylindric red/brown



umbel

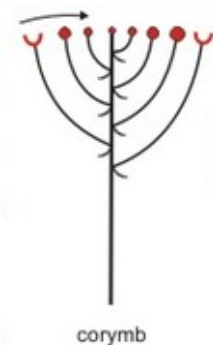


Inundated Beakrush (*Rhynchospora inundata*)



Inundated Beakrush (*Rhynchospora inundata*)

- Native
- Common throughout FL
- Marshes, bogs, wet flatwoods, cypress swamps, lake margins
- Spreads by rhizome and seeds



Inundated Beakrush (*Rhynchospora inundata*)

- Height : 1 m
- Leaves: upright, arise from base
- Spikelets: pale reddish/brown lance shaped
- Achenes: 4-6 mm, surrounded by bristles
- Rhizomes: thin, covered with scales

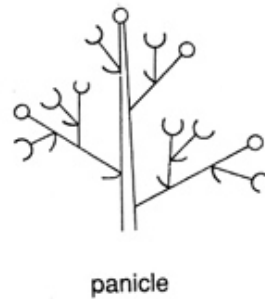


Wright's Nutrush (*Scleria lacustris*)



Wright's Nutrush (*Scleria lacustris*)

- Non native invasive
- FLEPPC: Cat I
- Annual
- Marshes, lakes, seasonal wetlands
- Spreads by seed



Wright's Nutrush (*Scleria lacustris*)

- Height: 2 m
- Stems: angular, spongy & red at base
- Leaves: scabrous, 1-2^{1/2} cm wide, contra-ligule triangular
- Inflorescences: axillary and terminal panicles
- Achenes: smooth, ovoid, subtended by bracts



Tropical Nutrush (*Scleria microcarpa*)



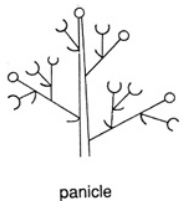
Tropical Nutrush (*Scleria microcarpa*)

- Non native invasive
- EDRR – Orange, Polk, Osceola, Palm Beach Co.
- FLEPPC 2019: Cat I
- Forested wetlands & cypress swamps
- Spreads by seed & short rhizome



Tropical Nutrush (*Scleria microcarpa*)

- Height: approx. 1 m
- Stems: slender, do not branch
- Leaves: scabrous, winged sheaths, lanceolate contra-ligule
- Inflorescences: axillary & terminal panicles
- Achenes: 1-2 mm, smooth, roundish



Eggers Nutrush (*Scleria eggersiana*)



Eggers Nutrush (*Scleria eggersiana*)

- Non native invasive
- EDRR Species – Hendry Co.
- Cypress swamps
- Spreads by seed & short rhizome



Eggers Nutrush (*Scleria eggersiana*)

- Height 3 m
- Stems: dense pith
- Leaves: scabrous, winged sheaths, triangular/lanceolate contra-ligule
- Inflorescences: terminal & axillary panicles
- Achenes: 2^{1/2} -3 mm, smooth, oval/round



Thank You!



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Questions? Need help with ID? aonisko@sfwmd.gov

References

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