

## CURTISS' SANDGRASS

*Calamovilfa curtissii* (Vasey) Scribn.

**Synonyms:** *Sporobolus vaseyi* Peterson, P.M.

**Family:** Poaceae (grass)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S4

**Legal Status:** US-none FL-Threatened

**Wetland Status:** US-FAC+ FL-FACW



Brenda Herring



**Field Description:** Tall, perennial, tufted grass originating from rhizomes. Leaves 2.25-5 mm wide and 20-50 cm long, flat to involute with smooth to rough texture and tips of blades tapering to a hair tip. Flowering stem up to 2 m tall with a long and narrow panicle comprised of awnless one-flowered spikelets.

**Similar Species:** Curtiss' sandgrass can be recognized by its tall stature and robust tufts. Together with its fairly specific location on the landscape, it is not to be confused with other grasses even in its vegetative form.

**Related Rare Species:** The state threatened pinewoods bluestem (*Andropogon arctatus*) also occurs in the Florida panhandle and in similar habitats, but its flower structure is a raceme, not a panicle as found in Curtiss' sandgrass.

**Habitat:** Flatwoods. Also on edges of dome swamps.

**Best Survey Season:** Summer-Fall; Flowers after fire.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Central peninsula, central and western panhandle. Florida endemic.

**Conservation Status:** Endemic to Florida. This species is protected on several large conservation lands such as Eglin Air Force Base and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Many of the known sites have been developed or are in danger of being developed. This species can be shaded out by titi and gallberry shrubs in the absence of fire.

**Protection and Management:** Continued prescribed burning of mesic and wet flatwoods every 2-3 years should promote the open, grassy habitat that favors. Fires should be allowed to enter ecotones around depressional wetlands and be suppressed naturally by the hydric conditions in the wetland. May be shaded out by titi and gallberry shrubs in absence of fire. Many plants occur on protected areas which receive frequent prescribed fire.

**References:** Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Hall 2019, Wunderlin, et al. 2020