

GOLDEN SEDGE

Carex lutea LeBlond

Synonyms: none

Family: Cyperaceae (sedge)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-Endangered FL-none

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-FACW



Jenna Annis

Field Description: Perennial **herb**; plants cespitose in small to large (up to ca. 45 fertile culms) clumps, with short ascending rhizomes; fertile culms (40)65-110(125) cm tall, 0.6-0.9 mm wide at base of lowermost spike; **Leaves** 3-7, mostly basal; blades 5.5-28 cm long, much shorter than culms, 1.8-3.8 mm wide, plicate, yellowish-green, glabrous, the margins antrorsely scabrous, the widest **leaves** 2.4-3.8 mm wide; **Inflorescences** (4.5)5.4-25(41) cm long, with all spikes quite separate, the lowest 2 pistillate spikes (if present) (1.6)4.5-18(33) cm distant; spikes single at nodes, ascending; **Perigynia** (3.5)3.9-5.2(5.8)mm long, 1.4-2.2 mm wide, spreading, strongly outcurved and squarrose in the spikes, the lowermost strongly reflexed, somewhat inflated, irregularly and asymmetri-cally trigonous with convex, obovate sides, glabrous, bright yellow proxi-mally, pale yellowish-green distally, short-stipitate and tapered to the base, 7-13-nerved with two nerves much more prominent than the rest, con-tracted into a strongly deflexed beak.

Similar Species: None; very distinctive in form; especially in fruit with yellow squarrose perigynia and strongly reflexed perigynium beaks.

Related Rare Species: Similar to no other *Carex* sp. in the Southeast; the single member of the northern *Carex* sect. *Ceratocystis* in the Southeast

Habitat: The species was discovered recently in Florida and seems to be associated with wet flatwoods / cypress stringer ecotones and basin swamp communities in the Florida panhandle. At this time, it is unclear whether the element in Florida is associated with coquina limestone.

Best Survey Season: Flowers Mar-Apr; fruiting Apr-late May

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Pender and Onslow Counties, NC; Discovered in Liberty and Gulf Counties, FL (tentative) in 2021; The element was collected in the panhandle of Florida in March 2021 and present identification is tentative pending genetic evaluation. The newly discovered populations in Florida and South Carolina, if confirmed as *Carex lutea*, will likely change the G rank. (May 2021)

Conservation Status: *Identification is unconfirmed and pending in FL at present; only two main areas have been found for the element in FL, during the spring of 2021.

Protection and Management: Protect basin swamp, wet flatwoods, and cypress stringer communities from logging and forestry operations; continue to apply prescribed fire at appropriate intervals in adjacent fire-maintained communities.

References: Leblond et al. 1994, Weakley, A.S. 2020