

19. The Cyperaceae and Other Monocotyledonous Families

CYPERACEAE, SEDGE FAMILY

STEMS SOLID and 3-angled. Leaves similar to those of grasses, with a linear blade and basal sheath. Leaf sheath forming a closed tube about stem. Flowers without petals, variously arranged, often in spikes, enclosed by a single bract. Fruit a flattened or 3-angled achene with a thick, hard pericarp.

Sedges resemble grasses in general appearance and are often confused with them. They are most easily distinguished by their 3-rowed leaves and triangular stems as compared with the two rows of grass leaves and round or flattened stems. Most sedges have a stiffer, harsher feeling than grasses when handled.

In addition to the above, there are sedges which have round stems and almost no leaves (e.g. bulrushes, spikerushes). These kinds are marsh and aquatic plants and rarely occur on agricultural land.

Carex, Sedge, slough grass. Flowers in spikes, unisexual. Staminate and pistillate flowers separate and different in appearance. Pistillate flowers enclosed within a sac-like structure (perigynium), which is retained as a covering about the fruit. p239

There are more than 100 kinds of sedges in the North Central States, frequently abundant in low meadows and uncultivated fields, along ditches, fence rows, and roadsides. They are evident primarily in the spring and early summer.

Cyperus, *Cyperus esculentus*, Yellow nutgrass. Plants perennial with slender rhizomes which bear small, ovoid tubers. Inflorescence a panicle of brownish-yellow spikelets. Achenes brown, slenderly triangular, each enclosed by a single bract. Sporadic, most common Southeast, poorly drained or sandy soils. p239

JUNCACEAE, RUSH FAMILY

Juncus, Rushes. Plants similar to grasses and sedges in appearance. Stems rounded. Leaf sheaths closed. Blades narrow, often circular in cross section. Flowers in terminal, branched clusters, small, green. p239

Petals and sepals both present, but similar in appearance, green. Fruit a capsule with numerous, tiny seeds. Mostly wet areas, uncultivated land. One species is locally abundant along paths, roadsides, and in towns.

LILIACEAE, LILY FAMILY

Allium, Onion. Perennials, with an onion-like odor. Plants arising from a scaly bulb similar to an onion but considerably smaller. Leaves slender, narrow, rounded in cross section. Flowers usually replaced by a cluster of bulblets which arise at stem tip. Bulblets egg-shaped, similar to basal bulb but smaller.

p241 *Allium canadense*, Wild onion. Underground bulb with a fibrous "fishnet-like" covering. Leaves mostly basal. Bulblets broadly ovoid. Southern. Forage grasses, pastures, small grains; considered a noxious weed in many states. Wild onion is particularly undesirable in pastures since it imparts a taint to milk.

p240 *Allium vineale*, Wild garlic. Underground bulb with a smooth covering. Leaves arising from stem as well as near base. Bulblets slenderly obovoid. Range and attributes same as above.



PLATE 151

Cyperus esculentus 1. Inflorescence x2/3.
Carex frankii 2. Apex of plant (staminate spike broken off) x1/2.
Juncus tenuis 3. Capsule surrounded by perianth x6. 4. Habit x1 1/3.

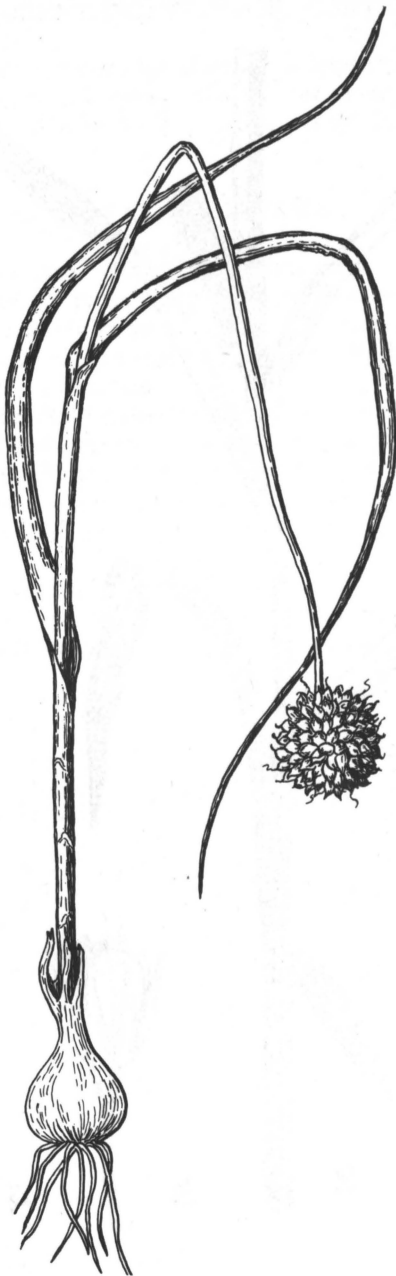


PLATE 152

Allium vineale Habit x2/3.



PLATE 153

Allium canadense Habit x2/3.