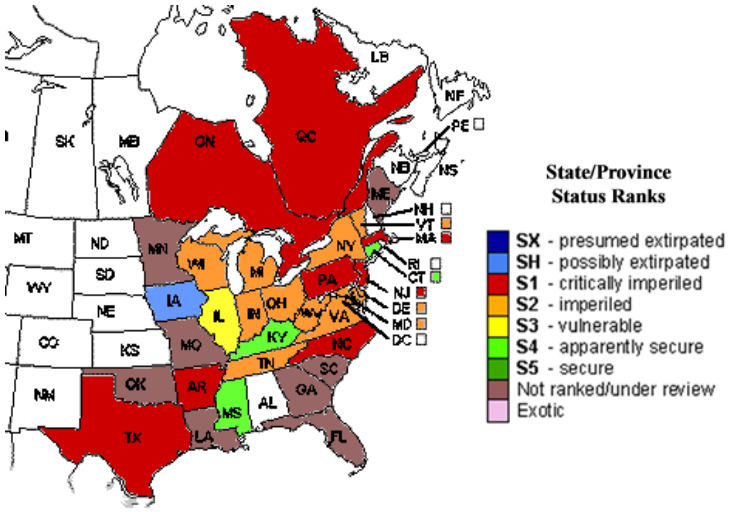
False Hop Sedge
Carex lupuliformis

Description
False hop sedge is a grass-like plant that grows 1½ to 3 feet (to 1 m) tall. Its common name refers to a superficial resemblance of its flower spikes to fruits of the hop vine. The leaves are linear, elongate, and up to ½ inch (13 mm) wide. The flowers are arranged in bur-like cylindrical spikes at the top of flowering stems. Male and female flowers are found in separate spikes, with usually one slender male spike held above a cluster of 2 to 6 robust female spikes. The female spikes contain densely packed, inflated sac-like structures (perigynia) that have long projecting beaks.

Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

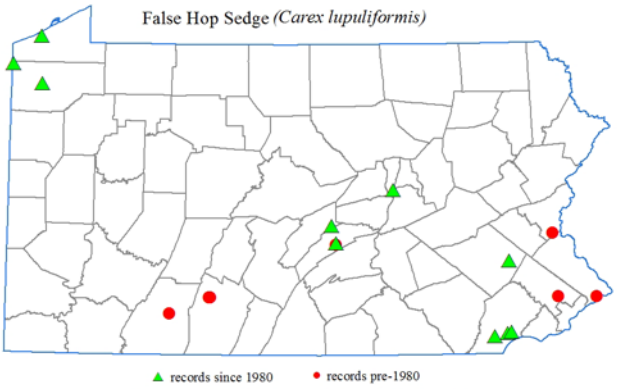
Distribution & Habitat
False hop sedge has a distribution from Canada south and west into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, the occurrences are mostly in the southern half of the state. This species grows in wetlands, such as vernal ponds, bottomland pools, swamps, and marshes, especially on calcareous substrates.

North American State/Province Conservation Status
Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status
The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers false hop sedge to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and its wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status of Undetermined, and has been assigned a suggested rarity status of Endangered by PABS.

Pennsylvania Distribution



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2014

Conservation Considerations
More field surveys are needed to determine the range, abundance, and ecological requirements of the false hop sedge. Creating buffers around wetlands, controlling invasive species, and protecting of wetland hydrology will help to maintain occurrences of the species.

NatureServe conservation status ranks
G4 – Apparently globally secure; S1– Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at http://www.natureserve.org/explorer.
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2014.
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania: Annotated Checklist and Atlas. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2000. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.