

# Pod-grass

## *Scheuchzeria palustris*

### Description

Pod-grass is a perennial grass-like plant, greatly resembling a rush (*Juncus* sp.), with a zig-zag stem that may grow to 1.5 feet (1.5 m) in height. The plant often forms colonies because of the presence of wide-spreading underground stems, or rhizomes. The hairless leaves are alternately arranged, consisting of a prominent basal sheathing portion that envelops the stem and a linear and elongate, ascending blade that is 2-12 inches (5-30 cm) in length and less than 3/16 inch (1-4 mm) in width. The most distinctive leaf feature may be the presence of a small pore-like opening just below the tip. The minute flowers, appearing in late May to July, are greenish and often tinged with yellow or red, 1/8 inch (2-4 mm) in length, and occur in stalked clusters above the leaves. The plant gets its common name, and is probably most conspicuous, in the fruiting stage, which consists of a dry pod, typically grouped in 3's and connected at their bases, containing small seeds.

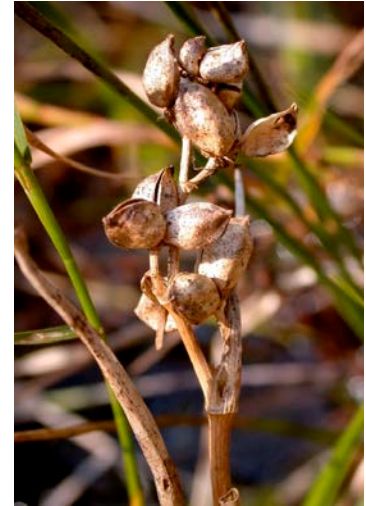
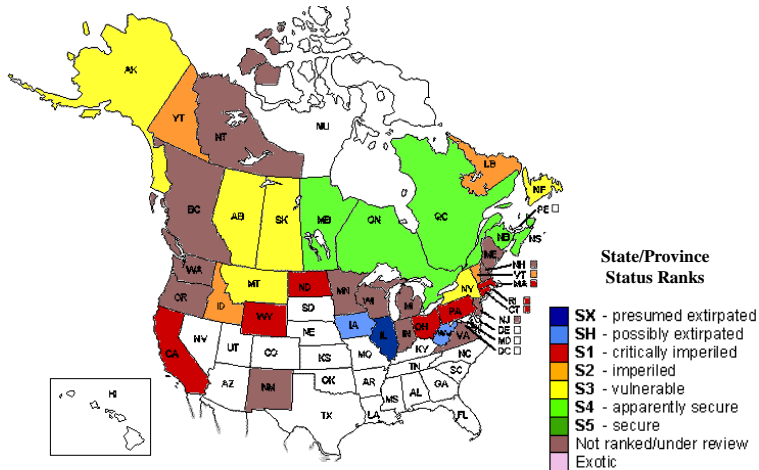


Photo source: Rich Zaino

### North American State/Province Conservation Status

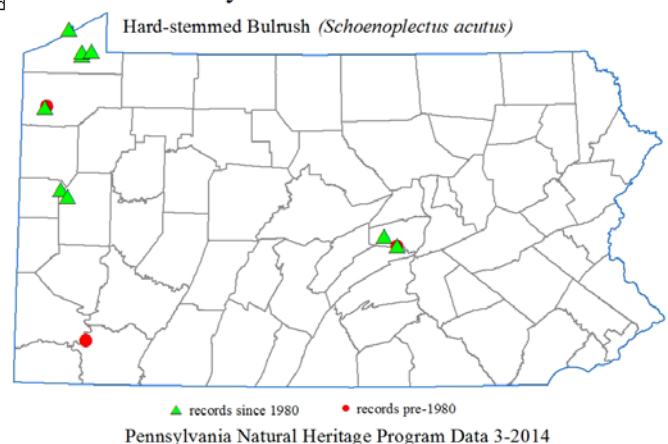
Map by NatureServe 2014



### Distribution & Habitat

Pod-grass has a transcontinental range across the cooler regions of North America. In Pennsylvania, it represents a northerly species, and has been documented historically mostly in the northern counties. It grows in bogs and peaty wetlands.

### Pennsylvania Distribution



### Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Pod-grass to be a species of special concern, based on the very few locations that have been recently confirmed and the specialized habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered.

### Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Pod-grass and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology surrounding wetlands and controlling invasive species. Pod-grass is often an indicator for bog habitats that may feature various orchids, insectivorous plants such as sundew, bladderwort, and pitcher plant, and other interesting species.

### NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S1 – Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

### References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2014.
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

