

# Cattail sedge (*Carex typhina*)

**Pennsylvania Plant Species of Concern**  
**State Rank: S2 (imperiled), Global Rank: G5 (secure)**

## Identification

Cattail sedge is a grass-like perennial that grows from 30 to 90 centimeters tall. The leaves are long and narrow, with parallel veins and a pronounced midrib. The lowest leaves grow from a point on the stem well above the ground, rather than at the base of the stem, a feature described as aphylllophy. Flowers are small, simple, and unisexual, grouped in a spike-like head at the apex of the stem. Pistillate (female) flowers form a cylindrical head above the smaller cluster of staminate (male) flowers.

## Habitat

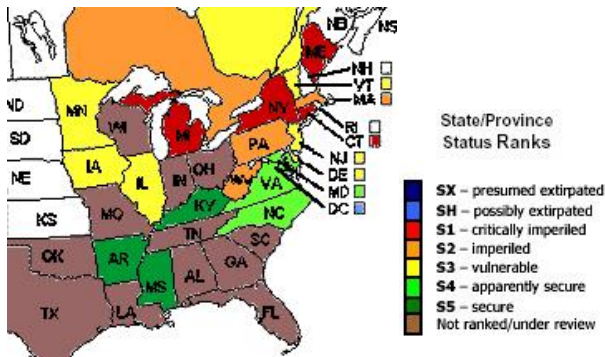
Cattail sedge tolerates shade and acidic soil, but requires very moist conditions. It grows in wet woods, along occasionally flooding streams, and in marshes from Québec south to Florida and Texas.



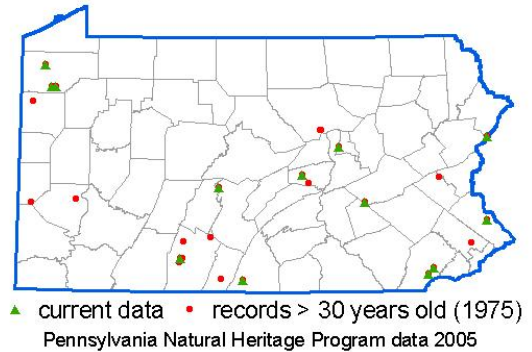
Robert H. Mohlenbrock, USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database - from *Midwest wetland flora: Field office illustrated guide to plant species*. (USDA SCS, Midwest National Technical Center, Lincoln, NE., 1989)

## North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (2007)



## Pennsylvania Distribution by County



## Status

Cattail sedge populations have been harmed most by disturbance and alteration of their wet, wooded habitats, whether in the form of logging, draining for use in agriculture or development, or changes created by flood control regimes.

## Conservation

Conservation of cattail sedge will require preservation and protection of its wetland habitat, particularly wooded areas along rivers. Prevention of wetland draining and flood regime alterations is also expected to help this species recover.

## References

- Gleason, Henry A. and Arthur Cronquist. 1991. *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*. Second ed. New York: The New York Botanical Garden. 735.
- NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: September 4, 2007).
- United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2005. The PLANTS Database [web application]. National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Available at <http://plants.usda.gov>. Accessed 24 February 2005.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program