Umbrella Flatsedge
Cyperus diandrus

Description

Umbrella Flatsedge is an annual grass-like herb with a more-or-less triangular stem that varies from a few inches to about 1 foot (.3 m) in height. The leaves have a sheathing basal portion and an elongate and linear blade that is 1/8 inch (3 mm) or less in width. The minute flowers, appearing in summer and fall, are grouped in flattened clusters, or spikelets, which radiate out from a central point at the tip of the stem. Each spikelet, averaging about 3/8 inch (1 cm) in length, has 2 opposite and facing rows of numerous individual flowers, each of which is subtended by a scale-like cover that tends to be purplish-brown at the tip and along both margins and with the remainder of the scale lacking the coloration. The fruits average less than 1/16 inch (about 1 mm) in length and at the tip have a long persistent hair-like style that is divided nearly to its base. There are several other species of *Cyperus*, particularly the common *C. bipartitus*, which look superficially similar to *C. diandrus*, and the latter is distinguished by its scale coloration pattern and very deeply divided style.

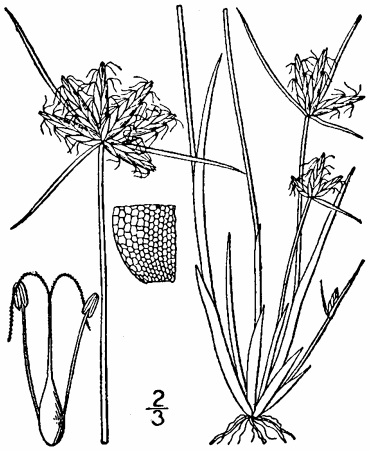
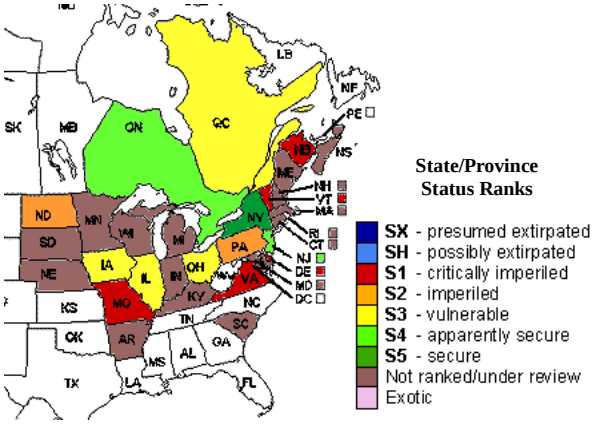


Photo source: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Distribution & Habitat

The Umbrella Flatsedge ranges from Nova Scotia to North Dakota and south into South Carolina and Arkansas. In Pennsylvania, this species has been documented historically mostly in the northwestern and eastern counties. It grows on shorelines of ponds, lakes and streams, and in bogs and marshes.

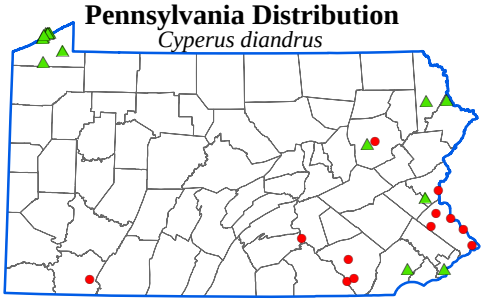
North American State/Province Conservation Status
Map by NatureServe 2010



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Umbrella Flatsedge to be a species of special concern, based on the limited number of locations recently confirmed and the wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered.

Pennsylvania Distribution
Cyperus diandrus



records since 1980 ● records pre-1980
Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2011

Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Umbrella Flatsedge and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology around wetlands and controlling invasive species.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S2 – Imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2011. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at http://www.natureserve.org/explorer.
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2011.
- 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. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program