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Common Name: ROAN MOUNTAIN SEDGE

Scientific Name: *Carex roanensis* F.J. Hermann

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Names: none

Family: Cyperaceae (sedge)

Rarity Ranks: G2G3/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial, grass-like, robust **herb** forming dense clumps. **Flowering stems** 24 - 34 inches (60 - 85 cm) tall, erect, solid, hairless, triangular in cross-section, longer than leaves at maturity, maroon at the base, with 3 - 5 leaves on the lower third of the stem. **Leaf blades** 5 - 18 inches (12 - 45 cm) long and less than $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (2.5 - 4.5 mm) wide, very hairy on the lower surface, smooth to slightly hairy on the upper surface; the lower part of the leaf is a hairy, purplish sheath that encircles the base of the stem. The topmost **flower spike** is $\frac{3}{4}$ - 2 inches (2 - 5.5 cm) long, solitary, with both female and male flowers. Lateral **flower spikes** are $\frac{3}{8}$ - $2\frac{3}{4}$ inch (1 - 7 cm) long, on stalks up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (3 - 40 mm) long, 2 - 3 spikes per stem, with female flowers only; each female flower spike with 10 - 40 fruits and scales; **scales** are translucent with a broad green midrib. **Fruit sac** (perigynium) about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (2.6 - 3.5 mm) long, densely hairy, olive-green with 5 - 8 conspicuous veins, loosely enclosing the fruit. **Fruit** less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch long, brown with dark red spots, with a definite stalk. Magnification of at least 10x is needed to examine the spikes and fruits.

Similar Species: Many sedges look alike; Roan Mountain sedge is distinguished by the combination of reddish-purple leaf sheaths and stem base, topmost spike with both female and male flowers, very hairy fruit sac, and the brown fruit with red spots. Ribbed sedge (*Carex virescens*) also has male and female flowers in the top spike; hairy, purplish sheaths; and hairy fruit sacs, but its fruit sac is smaller, less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (1.9 - 2.6 mm) long; its fruits are not red-spotted nor distinctly stalked.

Related Rare Species: Nearly 40 species of *Carex* are protected or of Special Concern in Georgia. Detailed information about 7 of these *Carex* species is provided on this website: Baltzell's sedge (*C. baltzellii*), granite dome sedge (*C. biltmoreana*), velvet sedge (*C. dasycarpa*), impressed-nerve sedge (*C. impressinervia*), wretched sedge (*C. misera*), Radford's sedge (*C. radfordii*), and Roan Mountain sedge (*C. roanensis*).

Habitat: Moist to somewhat drier forests on steep, rocky mountain slopes. Often found with beech, red maple, sugar maple, tulip poplar, yellow buckeye, white ash, white pine, chestnut oak, red oak, white oak, and basswood.

Life History: Roan Mountain sedge, like most sedges, is wind-pollinated. Nothing is known about seed dispersal or other aspects of reproduction for this species for this species.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted when fruits are present (mid-June–mid-July).

Range: Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Threats: Logging, development, trail- and road-building, and recreation activities.

Georgia Conservation Status: One population is known in Georgia, it occurs in the Chattahoochee National Forest. It has not been seen in more than 20 years.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect high elevation forests from clearing, logging, and development. In recreation areas, direct foot, horse, and off-road vehicle traffic away from populations.

Selected References:

Center for Plant Conservation. 2007. National Collection plant profile: *Carex roanensis*.
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Author of species account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Oct. 2007: original account

K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added picture

Z. Abouhamdan, April 2016: updated link