



**Common Name:** PORTER'S REED GRASS

**Scientific Name:** *Calamagrostis porteri* A. Gray ssp. *porteri*

**Other Commonly Used Names:** Porter's reed bent

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** *Calamagrostis porteri* A. Gray

**Family:** Poaceae/Gramineae (grass)

**Rarity Ranks:** G4T4/S1

**State Legal Status:** Rare

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** none

**Description:** Perennial **grass**, forming colonies. **Stems** 2 - 4 feet (60 - 120 cm) tall, unbranched, often leaning, usually hairless, with 2 - 5 swollen leaf nodes. **Leaves** often spread across the ground, and consist of a flat blade and a split sheath that tightly encircles the stem. **Leaf blade** usually 6 - 12 inches (15 - 30 cm) long and less than  $\frac{1}{3}$  inch (4-8 mm) wide, light blue-green on the upper surface and darker, shiny green on the lower surface; **leaf sheath** very hairy at the **collar** (bend where the sheath joins the blade), otherwise hairless; **ligule** (tiny flap of tissue at the top of the sheath, center photo) pale tan and ragged. **Flower cluster** 4 - 6 inches (10 - 15 cm) long, erect at the top of the stem, pale green or purplish; plants may not flower every year. **Flower (spikelet)** about  $\frac{1}{8}$  -  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (3.5 - 5.5 mm) long, pale green or tan, enclosed in 4 tiny bracts, with a sharply bent bristle (**awn**) about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 - 4 mm) long, and a tiny tuft of hairs, half the length of the spikelet, at its base. **Fruit** a pointed grain less than  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch (1 - 1.5 mm) long.

**Similar Species:** Bluejoint reed grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) and Nuttall's reed grass (*C. cinnoides*, synonym: *C. coarctata*) have hairless collars; both have straight awns, and the tuft of hair at the base of the spikelet is as long as the spikelet; both grow in wet areas.

**Related Rare Species:** Bartley's reed grass (*Calamagrostis porteri* ssp. *insperata*) is not known from Georgia but once occurred in several other southern states; it is now very rare. Its leaves are pale blue-green on both surfaces, and the sheaths have hairless collars.

**Habitat:** Dry, rocky, high elevation ridges and mountaintops with white oak, chestnut oak, and hickory.

**Life History:** Porter's reed grass reproduces vegetatively, forming small colonies of plants, and sexually, although flowering plants are uncommon. As with all grasses, its flowers are wind-pollinated and seeds are probably dispersed by a variety of insects and small mammals.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (July–August) and fruiting (July–December).

**Range:** Georgia, north to New York, west to Missouri.

**Threats:** Ridgeline and mountaintop developments and other clearing and soil disturbance; fire suppression.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Five small populations are known, all on the Chattahoochee National Forest. Because grasses are often overlooked, this species may be somewhat more common than current surveys indicate.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Avoid logging and other mechanical clearing on ridges and summits. Protect mountain tops and ridgelines from off-road-vehicle traffic. Apply prescribed fire occasionally to dry woods.

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Massey, J.R., D.K.S. Otte, T.A. Atkinson, and R.D. Whetstone. 1983. Atlas and illustrated guide to the threatened and endangered vascular plants of the mountains of North Carolina and Virginia, Technical Report SE-20. Department of Agriculture, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station, Asheville, North Carolina.

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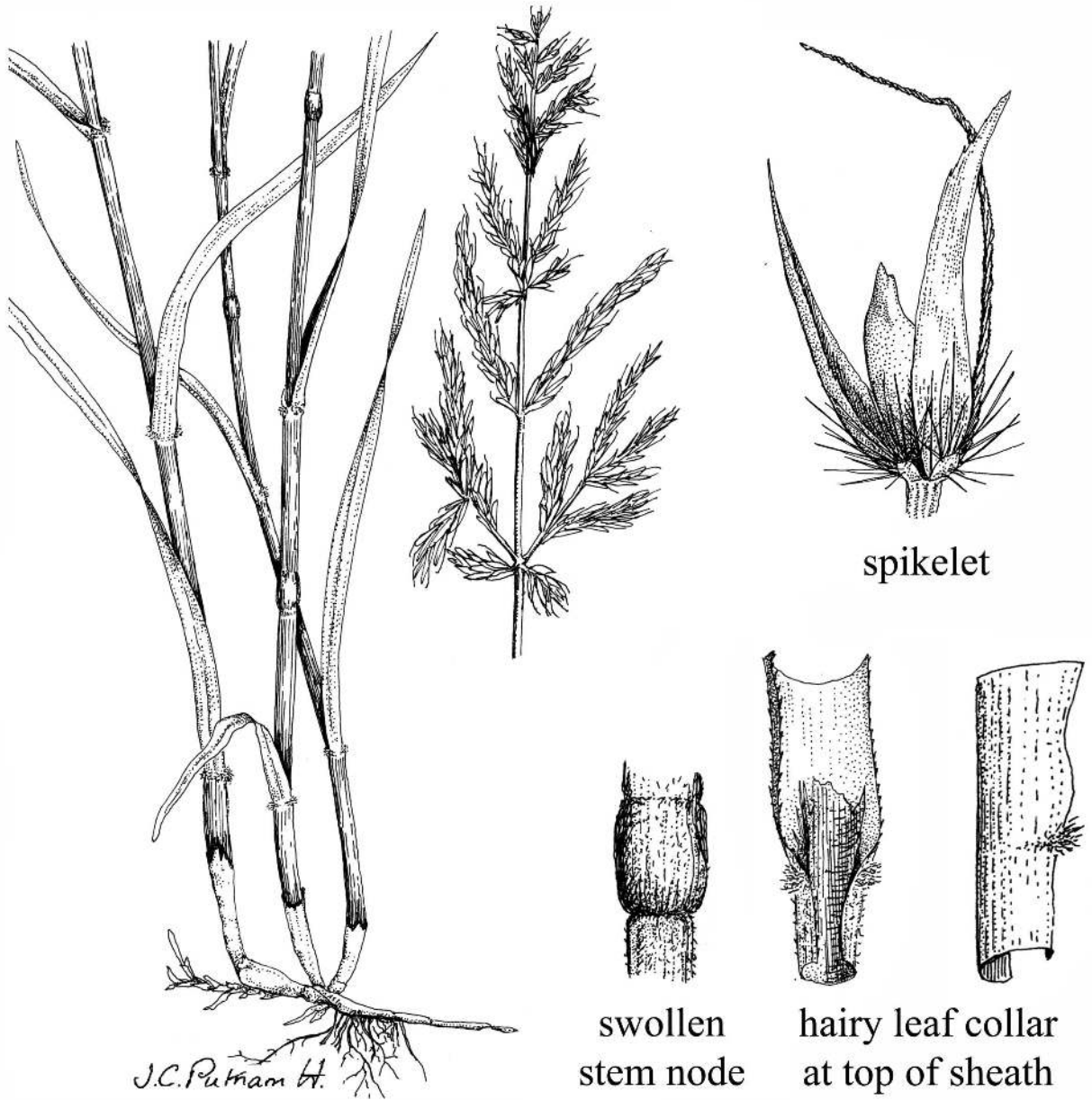
**Date Compiled or Updated:**

L. Chafin, Oct. 2007: original account

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



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*Calamagrostis porteri* ssp. *porteri*





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Inflorescence



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Ligule and collar