



Common Name: VELVET SEDGE

Scientific Name: *Carex dasycarpa* Muhlenberg

Other Commonly Used Names: sandy woods sedge

Previously Used Names: *Edritria dasycarpa* (Muhlenberg) Rafinesque

Family: Cyperaceae (sedge)

Rarity Ranks: G4?/S3

State Legal Status: Rare

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial, grass-like **herb** forming loose clumps connected by slender underground stems (**rhizomes**). **Flowering stems** 5 - 16 inches (13 - 40 cm) tall, with 3 - 8 leaves attached near the hairy base. **Leaves** 2 - 14 inches (5 - 35 cm) long, with a hairy, reddish, basal **sheath** encircling the stem. **Leaf blades** less than $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (2 - 4.5 mm) wide, softly hairy near the base, W-shaped in cross-section when young, with 3 prominent veins on the upper surface. **Male-flowered spike** up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (8 - 20 mm) long, solitary at the top of the flowering stem, the scales pale and papery with a green midvein. **Female-flowered spikes** 2 - 3 per stem, $\frac{1}{4}$ - 1 inch (6 - 27 mm) long, held below the male-flowered spike on the same stem, each spike with 5 - 25 fruits, the scales oval and 3-ribbed, with a pointed tip. **Fruit** body less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (4.5 - 6 mm) long, with a short stalk and elongated tip; fruit sharply 3-angled, enclosed in a woolly-hairy, heavily veined sac (**perigynium**); the fruit body occupies only the upper part of the sac. Magnification of 10x is needed to examine the spikes and fruits.

Similar Species: Wire sedge (*Carex tenax*) also occurs in dry woods. Its leaves are hairy near the base but are V-shaped in cross-section when young, and are often inrolled and wiry. Its fruit sacs are not hairy; the fruit lacks the short stalk, and the fruit body completely fills the sac.

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: Well drained, sandy-loamy soils in a variety of habitats: mixed pine-hardwood forests on river bluffs and stream terraces, levees and swales in floodplains, maritime forests along Atlantic coast rivers, longleaf pine woodlands on barrier islands, beech-magnolia-spruce pine forests.

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

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during fruiting (early spring–summer), when the distinctive hairy fruit sac and fruit stalk is present.

Range: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

Threats: Conversion of habitat to pine plantations, agriculture, and development. Invasion by exotic pest species such as Japanese honeysuckle and Japanese climbing fern.

Georgia Conservation Status: About 15 populations are currently known, most on conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Burn longleaf pine woodlands every 2 - 3 years during the growing season. Protect maritime, bluff, and ravine forests from soil disturbances and canopy removal. Control invasive exotic species.

Selected References:

FNA. 2003. Flora of North America, Vol. 23, Magnoliophyta: Commelinidae (in part), Cyperaceae (part 1). Oxford University Press, New York.

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer. Arlington, Virginia.
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>

Patrick, T.S., J.R. Allison, and G.A. Krakow. 1995. Protected plants of Georgia. Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program, Social Circle.

Radford, A.E., H.E. Ahles, and C.R. Bell. 1968. Manual of the vascular flora of the Carolinas. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Weakley, A.S. 2007. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill.

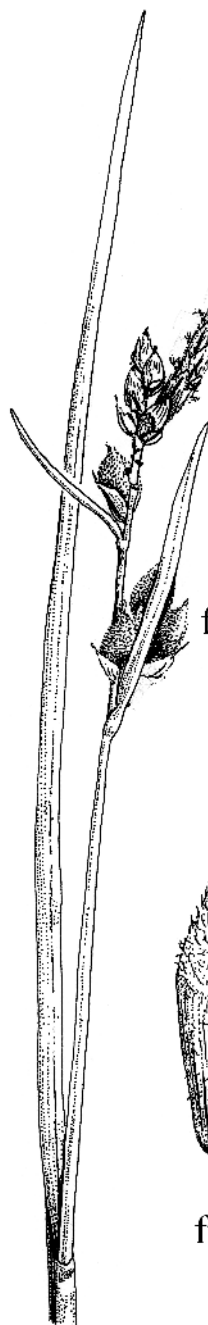
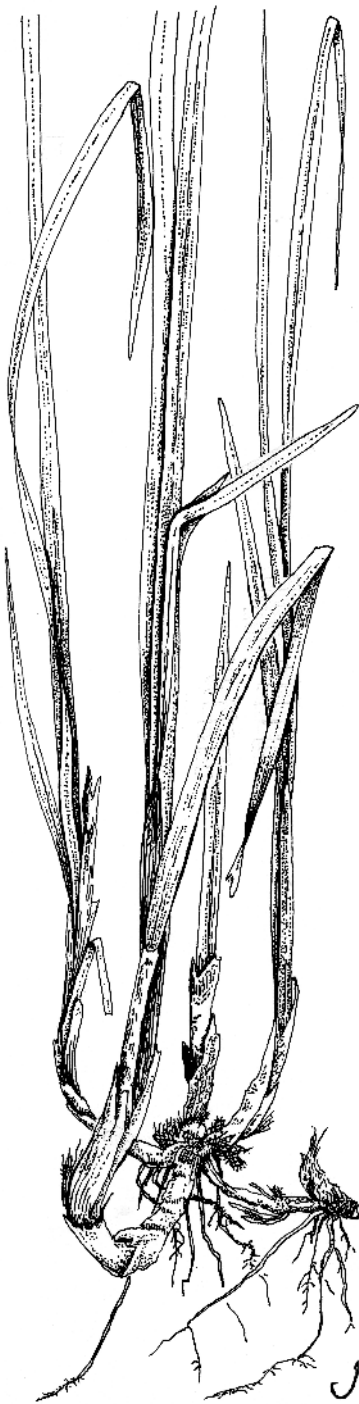
Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Nov. 2007: original account

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

VELVET SEDGE
Carex dasycarpa

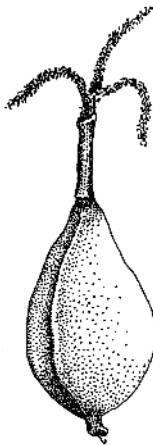


male-
flowered
spike

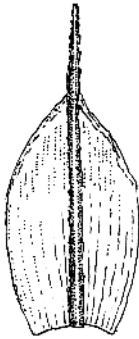
female-
flowered
spike



fruit sac



fruit



scale



leaf cross-section



fruit in sac
with scale

J.C. Putnam H.



©Hugh and Carol Nourse
Inflorescence