



**Common Name:** IMPRESSED-NERVE SEDGE

**Scientific Name:** *Carex impressinervia* Bryson, Kral, & Manhart

**Other Commonly Used Names:** ravine sedge

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** none

**Family:** Cyperaceae (sedge)

**Rarity Ranks:** G2/SNA

**State Legal Status:** Special Concern

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** none

**Description:** Perennial, grass-like herb forming dense clumps connected by underground stems (rhizomes). **Flowering stems** 10 - 34 inches (25 - 85 cm) tall, yellow-brown. **Leaf sheaths** hairless and greenish-white or light tan. **Leaf blades** about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (2.6 - 4 mm) wide, smooth

except for hairy midvein; the lower part of the leaf is a hairless, pale green or tan **sheath** encircling the base of the stem; old, fibrous **leaf bases** persist at the base of the plant. **Topmost flower spike** up to 1½ inch (1.9 - 4 cm) long, solitary at the top of the flowering stem, containing male flowers only. **Lateral flower spikes** up to 1¾ inches (1.1 - 4.3 cm) long, with both female and male flowers, 2 - 4 spikes per stem, held below the male-flowered spike on the same stem; each spike with 5 - 11 fruits, the overlapping scales oval with whitish margins and pointed tips. **Fruit** body about ⅛ inch (3.1 - 3.5 mm) long with a short, bent stalk and sharply bent tip; tightly enclosed in a 3-sided, heavily veined sac (**perigynium**) that has a very short or no beak. Magnification of 10x is needed to examine the spikes and fruits.

**Similar Species:** Few-fruited sedge (*Carex oligocarpa*) also forms dense clumps in rich forests over mafic and calcareous bedrock; it does not have old leaf bases persisting at the base of the plant and its leaf sheaths are purple rather than light green; its perigynium has a straight beak about ⅛ inch (0.2 - 0.4 mm) long.

**Related Rare Species:** Nearly 40 species of *Carex* are protected or of Special Concern in Georgia. Detailed information about 7 *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 hardwood forests on slopes above and in the floodplains of small streams, usually in areas with mafic or slate bedrock. In North Carolina, this species occurs in the lower Piedmont and upper Coastal Plain with sweet gum, spicebush, and jack-in-the-pulpit.

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

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during fruiting (spring).

**Range:** Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

**Threats:** Clearing and logging hardwoods in ravines and adjacent floodplains; damming streams.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Impressed-nerve sedge has been found in several nearby states but has not yet been reported from Georgia, probably because sedges are frequently overlooked and hard to identify.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Protect hardwood slope forests and floodplain forests from clearing, logging, and stream impoundment.

#### **Selected References:**

Bryson, C.T., R. Kral, and J.R. Manhart. 1987. A new species of *Carex* (Cyperaceae: section *Oligocarpaceae*) from the southeastern United States. *Rhodora* 89: 357-363.

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**Date Compiled or Updated:**

L. Chafin, Oct. 2008: original account

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



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