

Collins' Sedge *Carex collinsii*

Description

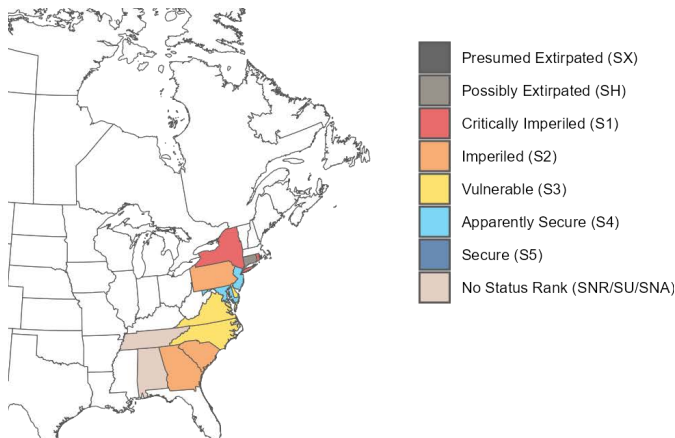
Collins' Sedge is a perennial grass-like plant with three-sided aerial stems that may grow to 2 feet (0.6 m) in height. The leaves include a sheathing basal portion and an elongate and narrow blade that is alternately arranged and averages about 3/16 inch (2.5-5 mm) in width. The minute flowers, which appear in spring, are clustered on the middle and upper stem, with the slender male flowers at the very top and 2-5 female flower clusters, each with 1-8 loosely arranged individual flowers, being lower on the stem. The plant is most recognizable when fruiting in summer, at which time the individual sac-like structures, or perigynia, which enclose each female flower and later the 3-sided fruits, have acquired their distinctive long, slender, and pointed shape, averaging about 7/16 inch (11 mm) in length and less than 1/16 inch (1.5 mm) in width. The tip of the perigynium has 2 minute teeth that are bent backward 180 degrees.



Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025

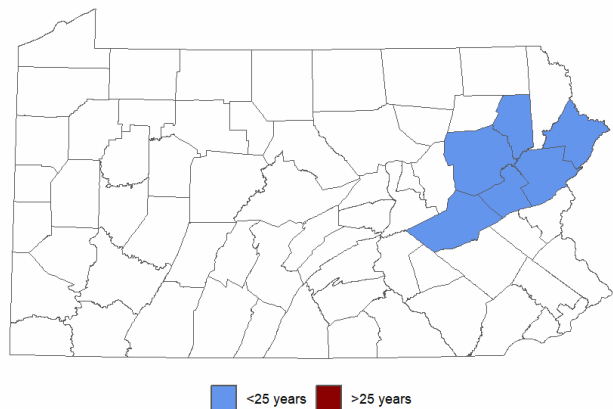


Distribution & Habitat

Collins' Sedge ranges from southern New England south into Georgia and Alabama, particularly in coastal areas, but also occasionally inland in the mountains. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in several northeastern counties. The species grows in sphagnum moss in acidic swamps and wet woods, often where conifers are a prominent part of the canopy.

Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Collins' Sedge 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 of Endangered and a PABS suggested rarity status of Threatened.



Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Collins' Sedge and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology surrounding wetlands.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G4 – Globally secure; S2– Imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2025.
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania: Annotated Checklist and Atlas. 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.