

# Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

## Little bluestem - Pennsylvania sedge opening

These grasslands occur on dry, acidic sites (usually over sandstone) where woody invasion is prevented or slowed by thin soil, droughty conditions, microclimate (frost pockets), frequent fire, or other disturbance regime. Some of these sites include rock outcrops and near-vertical cliffs. Species include *Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem), *Carex pennsylvanica* (Pennsylvania sedge), *Danthonia spicata* (poverty grass), *Deschampsia flexuosa* (common hairgrass), *C. communis* (a sedge), *Rubus flagellaris* (prickly dewberry), *Lespedeza* spp. (bush-clovers), and less commonly, *Oryzopsis pungens*<sup>S</sup> (slender mountain ricegrass). Mosses and lichens, especially *Cladonia* spp. and *Cladina* spp. (reindeer lichens), and *Polytrichum* spp. (hairy-cap mosses) are abundant on some sites. This community type may occur as part of the "Ridgetop acidic barrens complex."

**Related types:** This community type may occur as openings in any of the dry acidic woody types (forests, woodlands, or shrublands).

**Range:** Entire state.

**Selected references:** Carke 1946, Hough 1945, Schegel and Butch 1980.

**[Crosswalk:** Smith's "Acidic Rocky Summit," "Ridgetop Dwarf-Tree Forest" (in part), TNC - no crosswalk.]