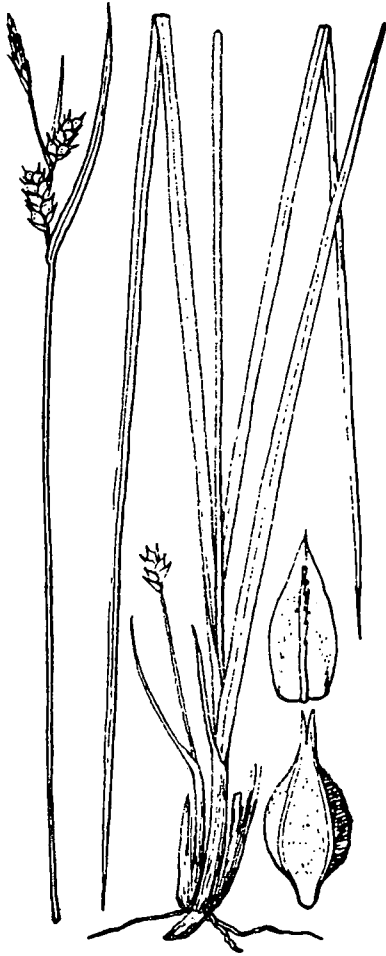


Ross Sedge

(Carex rossii)



Where does it grow? Ross sedge grows on dry soils in areas of cool, dry summers and cold, wet winters from Michigan to the Yukon, and south to Colorado and California. Its typical locality is in the Northwest Coast area. In Oregon, it has been found to occupy the pumice soils (Lapine and Longbell series) which range in depth from two feet to twenty-five feet. This soil-vegetation relationship is found mainly in the South Central part of Oregon, with its west boundary at the base of the Cascade Mountain range. The mean annual precipitation ranges from 18 inches to 25 inches. This sedge is found at elevations ranging from 4,800 feet to 6,300 feet. It occurs on gentle to steeply sloping topography and is primarily associated with ponderosa pine timber stands in eastern Oregon.

Is it important? It occurs scattered throughout many different plant communities and is generally rated as fair to good in forage value. It rarely furnishes a high percentage of feed, but it is very palatable.

What does it look like? It belongs to the sedge family (Cyperaceae), which is characterized by having triangular, solid, slender stems. The characteristics of

the genus (Carex) are: Grass-like; perennial by rootstocks; triangular solid stems; leaves are three-ranked (branching from all three sides); flowers solitary in the axils of the glumes or scales. Ross sedge has flowers of two kinds, male and female, on the same plant. The terminal spike is the male flower, about $1/5 - 2/5$ of an inch long; the side or lateral flowers are the female flowers, $1/10 - 1/5$ inch long, about 3-5 present on a stem. Stems are very slender and slightly rough. They may be longer or shorter than the leaves. The bract or leaf immediately below the flower, may surpass the flower in many cases.

Description:

Length of Life--Perennial.

Height--Usually 3 to 6 inches tall.

Growth Period--Early spring.

Growth Habit--From woody rootstocks.

How Does it Spread?--Principally by seed and by some short, underground stem-like roots (rhizomes).

Leaves--Three-ranked (branching from all three sides), blades 1/25 - 3/25 of an inch wide, rough margined, basal sheaths dark red.

Flowers--Loose, 2-5 flowered spike at the end of the stem, male flowers and female flowers separate on same flower stalk.

Seeds--Small, dry, single seed enclosed in a sac-like bract; bluntly triangular with convex sides and prominent angles.

Does it look like anything else? Ross sedge may be confused with other sedges. It can be distinguished by the use of taxonomic terms expressed in plant identification keys. Ross sedge can be distinguished from grasses and rushes by the triangular solid stem and three-ranked leaves. Grasses have round hollow stems with closed stem segments (nodes) and two-ranked leaves. Rushes have round hollow stems without nodes and two-ranked leaves.

Associated species: Ross sedge commonly occurs with bottlebrush squirreltail grass (RPL 13) and western needlegrass in areas of ponderosa pine, bitterbrush (RPL 1) and Idaho fescue (RPL 19). Ross sedge is most prominent in the openings between trees and shrubs. It is very responsive to disturbed areas, especially those areas in which most of the competing perennial vegetation is removed.