

2012 June Plant of the Month



***Carex canescens* L. var. *disjuncta* (Fernald) Toivonen**

Silvery Sedge

The Flora of NJ Project has selected a common yet often overlooked sedge as June's plant of the month. Silvery sedge is commonly found in many of NJ's remote swamps. The plant is a denizen of forested wetlands where it is characterized by its habitat of forming hummocks.

Silvery sedge is a wide-spread species found throughout the Coastal Plain counties extending into the Highlands and Valley & Ridge provinces where it is con-specific with the typical variety. While widespread, it has lost some of its habitat to development and changing land uses. This sedge can still be found in moist sandy soils, pond edges, cedar swamps and anywhere acidic, un-altered water quality exists. The plant appears to be sensitive to elevated nutrients, possibly due to increased competition created in highly enriched habitats. Silvery sedge is common when present and can be identified from a distance by its cespitose or clumping habit and a dull, blue-green cast on the leaves and stem created by a waxy coating. Long (≥ 90 cm) fruiting stalks arise from basal rosettes of narrow leaves. The flowering inflorescence is created by a series of remotely spaced or "disjunct" set of spikes. The spikes are formed by 5-30 achenes that are ovate with distinct teeth atop the perigynia.