

Grass-leaved Rush

Juncus biflorus

Description

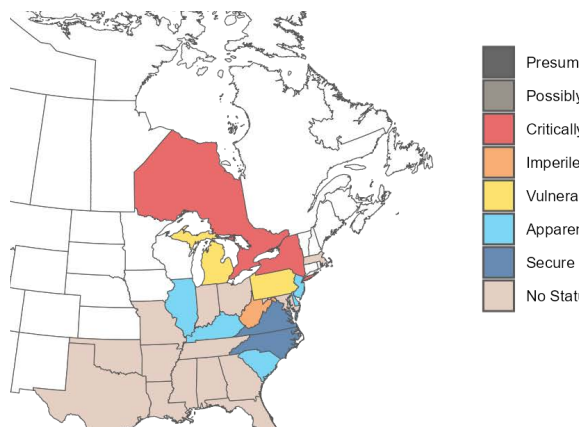
Grass-leaved Rush is a perennial grass-like plant that may grow to 3 feet (1 m) in height, but is often much shorter. The stem arises from an underground bulb-like base that also produces spreading horizontal stems, or rhizomes. The leaves are alternately arranged, consisting of a basal sheath portion that envelopes the stem and a linear, flattened, and untoothed blade that is ¼ inch (4-6 mm) in width. The leaf blades give the plant its common name and are in contrast to the leaves in most other species of rushes that are narrower and more-or-less rounded in cross section. The flowers, appearing in summer, are grouped in a terminal branching cluster that tends to be narrow at the base and then spreading outward. The individual flowers have 3 sepals and 3 petals that are usually red-brown in color and about 1/8 inch (3 mm) in length). Each flower has 3 stamens that often persist after shedding the pollen and even at the fruiting stage. The fruit is a dry, many-seeded capsule, usually brownish or reddish brown at maturity, averaging about 1/8 inch (2.5 mm) in length.



Photo Source: PNHP

North American State/Province Conservation Status

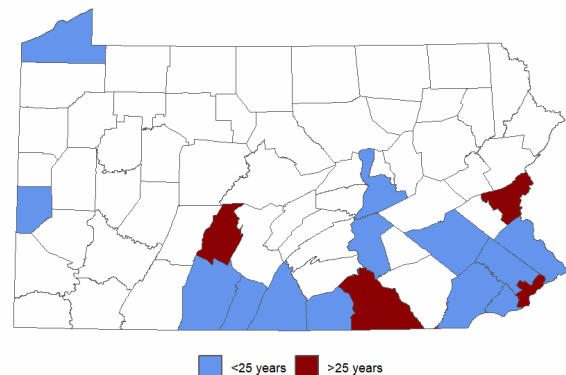
Map by NatureServe 2025



Distribution & Habitat

Grass-leaved Rush ranges from New England to Ontario and south into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically mostly in the southern, particularly the southeastern, counties. It grows in damp, sunny places, such as grasslands, meadows, clearings, old fields, thickets, and utility rights-of-way, and seems to have an affinity for diabase substrates.

Grass-leaved Rush (*Juncus biflorus*)



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Grass-leaved Rush to be a species of special concern, based on the moderate number of locations that have been recently confirmed. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare.

Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Grass-leaved Rush often requires maintaining early successional conditions and controlling invasive species. Active management, such as periodic mowing, may be needed to create the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for this species to thrive. Quarrying and habitat loss are threats at some locations.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S3 – Vulnerable 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. 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



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program