

Weeping Sedge

Carex pendula

Introduction: This European sedge, also known as pendulous sedge, is an evergreen perennial, one of the largest of the sedge family. Sedges are usually have triangular stems. The word *Carex* comes from the Greek word *keiro*, which means “to cut,” alluding to the minutely, yet sharp saw-toothed leaf edges of many species in this group. Sedges are often used as ornamentals in domestic gardens.

Description: This tufted plant can grow up to six-feet tall and form dense clumps. The mid-green leaves, which can grow to 36 inches long and are in ranks of three, are relatively wide, keeled and shiny, and are blue-green underneath. From late spring to early summer, the arching stems produce cylindrical, catkin-like green to dark brown flower spikes that grow to six-inches long – much longer than any native sedge. Flowers are unisexual and are without sepals or petals. Erect at first, these panicles become pendant with age. The lower parts of the leaves form sheaths that completely surround the stem. Stems are solid and triangular.

Habitat: Weeping sedge can be found in moist habitats, such as streamsides, ditches, bogs, damp woodland, shaded wetland, and areas alongside water. It can survive in sun and partial shade.

Distribution: This plant is native to Europe and north Africa. In the United States, it is found domestically in gardens throughout the country. It has begun to invade wildlands in Washington, Oregon and Virginia.

Reproduction and Dispersal: This grass propagates by seed or division. Flowers bloom July through August. As the plant is mostly monoecious, usually the same plant bears both sexes either in separate spikes or with males and female flowers segregated in different parts of the same spike. The male flower, which has 3 stamens, is the upper flower spike, while the female flowers are solitary pistils with 2-3 styles that are widely-spaced on pendulous spikes. Seeds of *C. pendula* are primarily dispersed by water, but can be moved by wind or people.

Pathways of Introduction and Spread: This plant was introduced as a garden ornamental; thus it most likely escaped from ill-managed gardens.

Threats/Impacts: *Carex pendula* has the potential to displace native plant species and any invertebrate and wildlife species that may depend on them. More research is needed to determine specific impacts.



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Early Detection and Prevention: As this plant is often used as a garden ornamental, care should be taken to not allow its spread. The best way to do so is to use native alternatives in stead. Please help prevent the further invasion of *C. pendula* by looking for and reporting escaped populations. In Oregon, report this plant by calling 1-866-INVADER.

Management Information: More research needed.

Research Needs: Impacts and management methods.

References

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Prof. Otto Wilhelm Thomé, 1885