

Cyperus bipartitus Torrey

shining flatsedge
Cyperaceae (Sedge Family)

Status: State Watch

Rank: G5S3S4

General Description: Tufted annual; culms slender, 2-8 inches tall; leaves few, all borne near the base, slender and more or less elongate, 1/16 inch wide; involucre bracts elongate, unequal, at least one of them much surpassing the inflorescence; spikelets in 1-several capitate clusters, the primary cluster sessile, the others (if present) on slender rays up to 1¼ inch long; spikelets 1/8 to 1/2 inch long; scales mostly 1/8 inch long blunt, with prominent, ample midrib, otherwise usually more or less strongly purple to crimson, deciduous at maturity from the persistent rachilla; stamens 2, rarely 3; style deeply bifid; achenes lenticular, 1/16 inch long, olivaceous to blackish, becoming minutely roughened or cross-ridged at maturity.

Identification Tips: *Cyperus bipartitus* co-occurs with several other species of *Cyperus*, including *C. aristatus*, *C. erythrorhizos*, and *C. strigosus*. *C. bipartitus* can be distinguished from the others on based on a combination of the following characters: its annual habit; short, capitate clusters of spikes; two stamens; bicarpellate pistil; and straight, blunt scales that are mostly 1/8 inch long.

Phenology: The flowering spikes form in August and the species flowers during the late summer and early fall.

Range: Peripheral in WA, it is widespread in the United States and southern Canada, but is more common eastward. In WA, it is currently known from Benton, Franklin, Klickitat, and Yakima counties and historically known from Asotin and Whitman counties. The species occurs within the Columbia Basin physiographic province.

Habitat: The species is known from streambanks and other wet, low places in the valleys and lowlands and is tolerant of alkaline conditions. In WA, it is known exclusively from the more arid regions of the state and occurs in riverine wetlands in small embayments and backwaters of the Columbia River. It usually occurs in habitats that are dominated by low-growing herbaceous wetland species. The vegetation in the species' habitat ranges

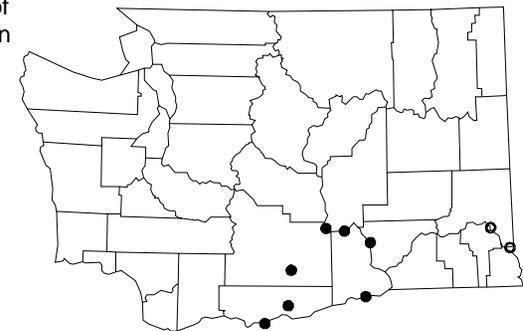
Cyperus bipartitus

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Known distribution of
Cyperus bipartitus in
Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Habitat (continued): from a dense, tangled mat of vegetation to sparsely vegetated shorelines with other graminoid species. Associated species include rushes (*Juncus* spp.), spike rushes (*Eleocharis* spp.), sedges (*Carex* sp.), flatsedges (*Cyperus* spp.), monkeyflower (*Mimulus* spp.), and numerous other annuals. Elevation ranges from 350 to 1200 feet.

Ecology: Historically, the species occurred in areas that were probably scoured occasionally by spring floods and the habitat was probably maintained in an early successional stage. The taxon presumably relies on a hydrologic regime that limits the growth of woody species. Currently, floods have been reduced or eliminated by the control of spring runoff by hydroelectric dams and woody species are expected to increase as a result.

State Status Comments: The relatively low number of known populations, the loss of habitat, and the manipulated nature of remaining habitat are the primary factors contributing to the species status.

Inventory Needs: Additional inventory along the Columbia River and its major tributaries is needed.

Threats and Management Concerns: Changes in hydrologic regime, recreational trampling, cattle grazing, and military training are the main threats to *Cyperus bipartitus* populations. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) could pose a threat to *C. bipartitus*.

Comments: Synonymous with *Cyperus rivularis* Kunth.

References:

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1969. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 1: Vascular Cryptogams, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 914 pp.

Kartesz, J.T. and R. Kartesz. 1980. A synonymized Checklist of the Vascular Flora of the United States, Canada and Greenland. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.