



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581
tel: (508) 389-6360, fax: (508) 389-7891
www.nhesp.org

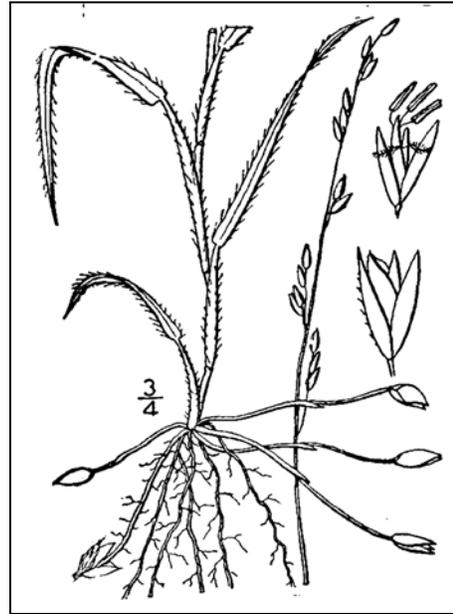
Annual Peanut-grass

Amphicarpum amphicarpon (Pursh) Nash

State Status: Endangered

Federal Status: None

Description: Annual Peanut-grass (*Amphicarpum amphicarpon*) is a medium-sized (30–80 cm; 12–31 in.), erect annual in the Grass family (Poaceae), with hairy stem and leaves. The leaves are 10 to 15 cm long, 5 to 15 mm wide, and largely clustered at the lower end of the stem, becoming more sparse and smaller on the upper part of the stem. The leaf blades and the leaf sheaths – the lower part of the leaf that clasps the stem – are covered with short hairs that make them rough to the touch. The genus name, which translates to “double fruiting,” and the common name refer to the underground flowers produced by this species in addition to the more familiar above-ground inflorescence. The 5 to 15 cm aerial inflorescence is either un-branched or has a few simple branches held close, with awnless, elliptical spikelets (4 mm) held singly. The plump underground spikelets are 6 to 7 mm, each attached singly to a slender root-like branch.



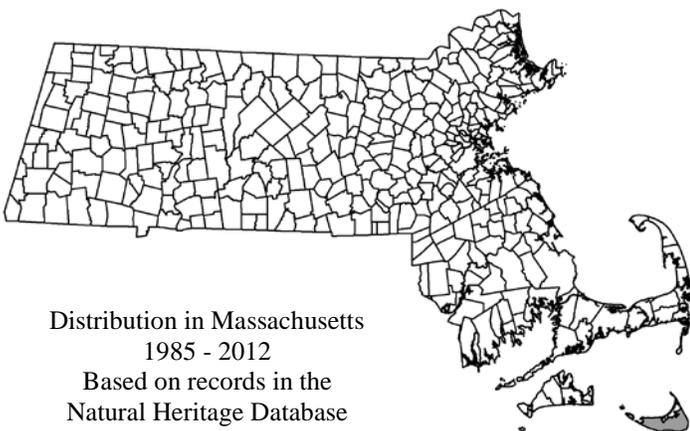
Annual Peanut-grass has subterranean spikelets in addition to the above-ground inflorescence.

USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 1: 164.

Aids to Identification: Positive identification of grasses requires the use of specialized keys. The following features help to distinguish Annual Peanut-grass:

- Above-ground spikelets dorsally compressed, with a single, often sterile terminal floret; lateral floret characterized by a glume-like sterile lemma
- Ligule finely divided resembling a ring of hairs
- First glume short or absent; second glume the same size as the sterile lemma
- Fertile lemma with scattered short hairs

Similar species: Annual Peanut-grass is the only member of its genus in Massachusetts; the subterranean spikelets are diagnostic.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1985 - 2012
Based on records in the
Natural Heritage Database

Flowering in Massachusetts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Population Status in Massachusetts: Annual Peanut-grass is listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act as Endangered. All listed species are protected from killing, collecting, possessing, or sale, and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. Annual Peanut-grass is known in Massachusetts only from Nantucket County.

Range: This grass occurs from southeastern Massachusetts south along the coastal plain to Georgia.

Habitat: Annual Peanut-grass is typically found on the shores of small, sandy or peaty coastal plain ponds. Associated species include Brown Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora capitellata*), Pondshore Flatsedge (*Cyperus dentatus*), Threeway Sedge (*Dulichium arundinaceum*), Northern Meadow-beauty (*Rhexia virginica*), Canada Rush (*Juncus canadensis*), Spatulate-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), and Slender-leaved Goldenrod (*Euthamia caroliniana*).

Threats and Management Recommendations: The greatest threat to rare species and natural communities of coastal sand plains is habitat loss due to development. These sandy sites are particularly attractive for development since they are generally well-drained and have little topographic variation. Plants such as Annual Peanut-grass that are associated with moist pockets of soil are also threatened by water withdrawals that lower groundwater levels and by climate-change associated variations in patterns of precipitation and drought.

Populations of Annual Peanut-grass should be monitored for invasions of exotic plants and over-abundance of native plants due to fire suppression; if exotic or native plants are competing with this species, a plan should be developed, in consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, to remove the competitors. Known habitat locations should be protected from dramatic changes in light or moisture conditions. Rare plant locations that receive heavy recreational use should be carefully monitored for plant damage or soil disturbance; trails can sometimes be re-routed to protect populations of rare species. All active management of rare plant populations (including invasive species removal) is subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and should be planned in close consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

References and Additional Information:

Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, NY.

Gleason, H. A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*, 2nd edition. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.

NatureServe. 2009. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, VA.
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.

USDA, NRCS. 2010. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

Updated 2012
Map Updated 2012