



Blooming Boulevards

Connecting neighbourhoods to nature.

Native Sedgescaping

Info from the article ***Sedgescaping: they share the space unselfishly***

by RIDEAU 1000 ISLANDS MASTER GARDENERS

<https://rideau1000islandsmastergardeners.com/wildscaping/sedgescapes/>



George Weigel, Pennsylvania sedge (Carex pensylvanica) makes a good no mow lawn substitute

Sedges make a great lawn alternative, especially in tough spots like dry shade. While a few sedges such as Pennsylvania Sedge (Carex pensylvanica) and Appalachian sedge (Carex appalachica) work as a lawn-like groundcover (how to plant a sedge lawn), most sedges aren't aggressive enough to out compete weeds.

For great biodiversity and resilience consider combining different sedges in a matrix design. You can experiment with a Carex community composed of several compatible sedges or interplant sedges with perennials. For more background on designing a carex community, get a copy of Roy Diblik's wonderful book Know Maintenance Perennial Garden.



Recommended Sedges for Southern Ontario Gardens

Scientific name	Common name	Description
<i>Carex appalachica</i>	Appalachian sedge	Drought tolerant lawn substitute, native to dry woods, dense mounded tufts
<i>Carex aurea</i>	Golden sedge	Native to moist to wet shores, pale green to yellow foliage, small green blooms in June ripen to edible light brown seeds mid summer, 10-15 cm, moist to wet soil
<i>Carex bicknellii</i>	bicknell's sedge	Native to dry prairies and slopes, drought tolerant sedge, good vertical accent, 60-90 cm
<i>Carex bromoides</i>	Brome sedge	Graceful native sedge, but not drought tolerant
<i>Carex brevior</i>	fescue sedge	Native sedge, Roy Diblik pairs with <i>Stachys officinalis</i> 'hummelo'
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Blue sedge	Naturalized, drought tolerant, grows in diverse habitats, spreads by rhizomes, good ground cover



Blooming Boulevards

Connecting neighbourhoods to nature.

<i>Carex greyi</i>	Gray's sedge	Short (5 cm) native sedge prefers light shade, bold texture, chestnut sized, green flowered spiked seedheads resemble a mace
<i>Carex grisea</i>	wood sedge	Native sedge, foliage lasts throughout winter, reseeds itself, tolerates wide range of soil
<i>Carex laxiflora</i>	Loose-flowered sedge	Native to rich, deciduous woods & meadows, 60-90 cm, distinctive, wide-leaved, tussock-forming sedge with pale green leaves and seed heads makes a good companion to many spring-blooming woodland wildflowers
<i>Carex muskingumens</i>	swamp sedge	Native to low woods and wet meadows, tall (60-90 cm) sedge resembles a small palm tree, drought tolerant if in partial shade. Large dense root system makes it great for rain gardens.
<i>Carex pennsylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania sedge	Native to open woodlands, colony forming drought tolerant sedge makes a good lawn substitute, good under ferns and low growing shade perennials



Blooming Boulevards

Connecting neighbourhoods to nature.

<i>Carex plantaginea</i>	Plaintain sedge	Native, semi-evergreen woodland sedge, great companion for native ground covers, works well in a sedge matrix
<i>Carex shortia</i>	Short's sedge	Native architectural sedge, flower spikes stand throughout summer
<i>Carex sprengelii</i>	Long-beaked sedge	Native to moist deciduous woods, upright slightly arching, 60-90 cm, dense clumps, messy looking in June
<i>Carex swanii</i>	Downy green sedge	Native to dry to wet mesic forests, 30-90 cm, prefers consistent moisture, Roy Diblik says pairs well with salvia

References

- [Lawn Alternative Update from the Scott Arboretum](#) talks about their experiments with sedges, the best performers in shade (some don't do well interplanted with alliums!). A couple of other good posts from the Arboretum [An Introduction into Caricology – The Study of Sedges](#)
- [Three native sedges made for the shade](#), Dyck Arboretum
- [Sedges: These grasslike perennials act as dazzling stars or demure supporters in sun and shade](#), Roy Diblik includes good garden companions
- [Sedge Lawns: A Sustainable, Low-Maintenance Alternative to Grass](#), Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- [Role of sedges in garden design](#)



Blooming Boulevards

Connecting neighbourhoods to nature.

- [Sedges for lawn alternatives](#)
- [Grasses and sedges from the ground cover up](#)
- [Sick of buying mulch for the garden? The pros have a different idea.](#)
- [Native sedges for the home garden](#)
- [Southern Ontario Vascular Plant Species List](#) Large list of native sedges of Ontario
- [A Brief Overview of the Sixty Common or Uncommon Sedges \(Carex sp.\) of Hamilton/Halton/Peel](#)

Sources

- Norview Gardens (Ontario, wholesale)
- [Verbinnen's Nursery](#) (Ontario)