Carex pensylvanica
Pennsylvania Sedge

Delicate, arching, semi-evergreen leaves define this native sedge found in much of the Mid-Atlantic Region.* In dry shade where lawn maintenance is a challenge, this substitute** never needs mowing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grass / Sedge</th>
<th>Flowers, Fountaining Habit, En Masse</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height: ½–1½ feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spread: ½–1 foot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloom Color: Green, yellow, reddish purple, white</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Characteristics**

- Semi-evergreen, shade-loving perennial sedge with fountaining habit
- Narrow, grass-like, medium green leaves, 8–12 inches long
- Insignificant inflorescences atop single rough culms (stems) from April to July are followed by tiny fruits (achenes) encased in sac-like bracts
- Foliage turns sandy-tan in fall
- Spreads by rhizomes to form loose colonies to dense mats with a creeping habit

**Attributes**

- Tolerates heavy shade and wet soil
- No serious pests or diseases; deer rarely damage
- Often found growing near oak trees resulting in the common name “oak sedge”
- Attracts insects and birds

**Growing and Maintenance Tips**

- Soil Requirements: Average, well-drained
- Light Requirements: Partial Shade, Shade
- Water Requirements: Dry, Moist
- Does not grow well from seed
- Cut to ground early spring to keep tidy appearance
- Use in dry shade as alternative to lawn, ground cover, or underplanting for shade perennials
- Hardiness: USDA Zones 3–8

**Excellent Replacement for**

- *Festuca arundinacea* - Tall Fescue

*It is native in DC and common in DE. It is native in most MD and PA counties. In VA, it is common in the mountains and Piedmont and infrequent in the Coastal Plain.

**If used as a lawn substitute, then plant densely from purchased stock. It can be kept unmown or mowed 2–3 times per year at a height of 2–4 inches.

Images by Elaine Mills private garden, Arlington, VA and Longwood Gardens