



Carex plantaginea

Plantain-leaved Sedge

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



The most ornamental of the woodland sedges, this species, sometimes referred to as Seersucker Sedge, is generally found in rich mountain woodlands.* In the garden it can fill many roles, substituting for popular non-native plants and even tolerating difficult, dry shaded sites.

Grass / Sedge	Clump, Inflorescences, Fruit
Height: ½–1 foot	
Spread: 1–2 feet	
Bloom Color: Maroon and green	
Characteristics	
Evergreen perennial , clump-forming sedge	 
Rosettes of basal, strap-like, arching, green leaves with three prominent veins and puckered surface	
Green, triangular culms with maroon to purplish bract sheaths bear inflorescences of 2–4 lateral pistillate & terminal staminate spikelets in March	
Achene in perigynium subtended by a scale in spring	
Over-wintered foliage may shrivel at tips	
Spreads slowly by short rhizomes	
Attributes	
Tolerates rocky or alkaline soil and dry shade; dislikes full sun; no serious pests or diseases	
Deer and rabbits may browse fertile culms	
Winter interest	
Birds eat seeds; larval host for Appalachian Brown	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Rich, fertile soil	<i>Hosta</i> - Hosta
Light Requirements : Partial Shade, Shade	<i>Liriope muscari</i> - Lilyturf
Water Requirements : Moist	<i>Liriope spicata</i> - Creeping Liriope
Cut back** in late winter before new growth begins	<i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i> - Mondo Grass
Propagate by dividing established clumps	<p>*In the Mid-Atlantic, it is not native to DC or DE. In MD, it is found in Garrett and Montgomery counties. In PA, it is frequent in the northern, south-central and south-western parts and rare in the southeast. In VA, it is rare in the northern Piedmont (it is reported in Fairfax and Loudoun counties) and infrequent in the mountains.</p> <p>**Mt. Cuba Center suggests avoiding hard cutbacks to prevent voids in the landscape until new growth fleshes out by late spring or early summer.</p>
Use as a ground cover, to control erosion on shady slopes, as a woodland trail border, or massed with other shade garden plants	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–8b	
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Elaine Mills, Nat'l Arboretum & private garden, Arlington, VA and by Mary Free (spikelets), Shade Garden



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