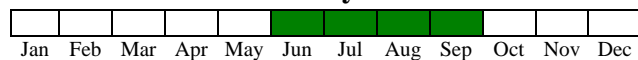


**Best Survey Period**



**Legal status:** May be at risk in Ontario. Although it is very rare in Canada, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has not yet assessed the status of this species.

**Global and provincial rank:** G5/S1

**Other Common names:** Nut-rush, Whipgrass, Whip Nut-rush, Stone-rush

**Family:** Cyperaceae. The sedge family.

**Total range:** *S. triglomerata* is local, but widespread in eastern North America and reaches Mexico and Puerto Rico. It is found from Massachusetts through Ontario to Wisconsin and south to Florida and Texas.

**Provincial distribution:** Extant populations of tall nut-rush are restricted to Walpole Island First Nation and Essex County in extreme southwestern Ontario. Historically the species has been recorded in Middlesex County and the Toronto area.

**Recognition:** Tall nut-rush is a perennial growing from a clustered rhizome that forms hard, tight nodules. The stems are usually tufted, sharply 3-angled, up to 80 cm tall, but usually shorter. It usually grows amongst other vegetation. The leaves are 4-8 mm wide, have purplish to brownish sheaths and are ribbed and shorter than the flowering stems. They are often hairy. Spikelets are bunched at the end of the stem and in the axils. Each group usually contains 3-10 spikelets. The bracts below each groups of spikelets are leaf-like about 3-10 cm long.

The achenes (nutlets) are swollen, round with a blunt tip, smooth, shining and either white or occasionally drab grey, 2-3 mm long.

Other species of *Scleria* that are superficially similar have sculptured, rather than smooth, nutlets. In members of the genus *Rhynchospora* that also have whitish nutlets they are capped by a small tubercle or swelling.

**Habitat:** Tall nut-rush has a considerable range of suitable habitats. In Ontario it is characteristic of moist to wet prairies on sandy loam or silt loam. Elsewhere it can grow in moist sandy meadows, the margins of marshes and swales, open borders of oak woodland, deep woodland and open moist pine barrens.. It may be locally common to abundant in such habitats.

**Biology:** *Scleria* is a large neotropical and sub-neotropical genus, but few species range into temperate latitudes.

Plants are monoecious, both male and female flowers are different flowers of the same plant.

**Conservation/management:** This is a prairie species and probably needs fire for maintenance. Threats include conversion of prairie habitat to other land uses and loss of prairie through natural succession when fire is suppressed.

**Comments:** *S. triglomerata* is locally abundant in moist prairies on Walpole Island. Although it is hidden amongst other vegetation it is fairly distinctive because of the conspicuous white nutlets.

The name *Scleria* comes from the Greek *skleros*, meaning hard, and refers to the stony nutlet

**Research needs:** *S. triglomerata* is not currently tracked on Walpole Island. The extent of the populations are not known.

**Related abstracts:** Virginia Mountain Mint, White Prairie Gentian..

**Selected references:**

Argus, G.W. and D.J. White. 1982. Atlas of the rare vascular plants of Ontario: Part 1. National Museums of Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Looseleaf..

Braun, E.L. 1967. The: Cat-tails to orchids. The Ohio State Univ. Press, Columbus OH. 464 pp.

**Abstract citation:**

Bowles, J.M. 2004. Special plant abstract for *Scleria triglomerata* (Tall Nut-rush). Walpole Island Heritage Centre, ON and Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Lansing, MI. 2 pp.