

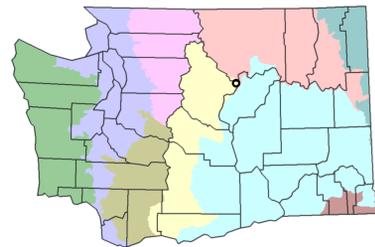
***Eleocharis atropurpurea* (Retz.) J. Presl & C. Presl**

purple spike-rush

Cyperaceae - sedge family

status: State Possibly Extirpated, USFS strategic

rank: G4G5 / SX



**General Description:** Small, tufted annual lacking creeping rhizomes; stems slender, 2-12 (19) cm tall. Leaves all basal, reduced to mere sheaths surrounding the basal portions of culms.

**Floral Characteristics:** Spikelets solitary and terminal, 2-6 (8) mm long, oblong-ovoid, tapered to a point at the tip, many-flowered, with small, closely overlapping scales. Scales 1-1.5 mm long, with a broad green or straw-colored midstripe and brown or purplish sides. Perianth bristles (0) 4-6, whitish, smooth or barely barbed, mostly shorter than the achene. Stigmas 2. Anthers less than 0.5 mm long.

**Fruits:** Achenes lenticular, smooth, shining black to dark cherry red, 0.3-0.5 mm long, including the pale, minute apical tubercle (persistent style base) that is often constricted at the base. Fruits June to September.

**Identification Tips:** *Eleocharis ovata* is a larger annual 5-50 cm tall, with spikelet scales up to 2.5 mm long and straw-colored to dark brown achenes 1-1.5 mm long. *E. palustris* is a rhizomatous perennial with yellow to medium brown achenes 1.5-2.5 mm long, anthers 1.3-2.5 mm long, scales 2-4.5 mm long, and spikelets 5-23 mm long. *E. acicularis* is a rhizomatous perennial with 3 stigmas and pale, ribbed achenes. *E. geniculata*, a similar annual species, has been reported from southern B.C. The achenes of *E. geniculata* are 0.5-1.1 mm long, with tubercles rarely constricted at the base, and reddish brown perianth bristles.

**Range:** Worldwide in warmer climates. Scattered across the U.S. and occasionally found in southern Canada.

**Habitat/Ecology:** A facultative wetland species of pond and lake margins, canal banks, irrigation ditches, and maritime shores, from 0 to 1800 m (0-5900 ft). This species once occurred on the shore of Lake Chelan at approximately 335 m (1100 ft).

**Comments:** Known from a single Chelan Co. collection from 1892. During recent extensive surveys of the Lake Chelan area, the species was not relocated. This taxon is rare in B.C. and several midwestern and eastern states.

**References:** Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 23.

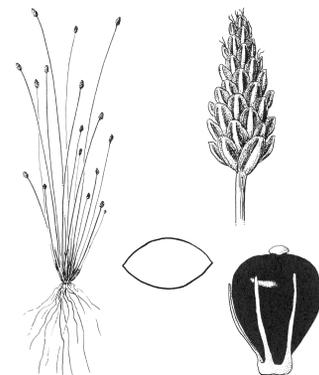


Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
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