

SPOROBOLUS OZARKANUS FERN. NEW TO ILLINOIS

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ABSTRACT

Sporobolus ozarkanus Fern. is reported for Illinois for the first time. Numerous individuals of this taxon were found in two disturbed prairie habitats along a railroad in Clay County, Illinois.

Sporobolus ozarkanus Fern. was originally described from specimens collected on chert-glades in southwestern Missouri (Fernald, 1933), and is now known from southern Indiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, northwestern Georgia, northern Alabama, and Mississippi (Pohl, personal communication). This taxon is similar to *S. neglectus* Nash (Fernald, 1950) and has been reduced to synonymy under that species (Gleason and Cronquist, 1963; Hitchcock, 1950), and has been considered a variety of that species (Steyermark, 1963). Also, it has been considered a variety of *S. vaginiflorus* (Torr.) Wood (Shinners, 1954), and Steyermark (1963) suggests that *S. ozarkanus* may likely be judged and eventually proved a hybrid, intermediate between *S. vaginiflorus* var. *vaginiflorus* and *S. neglectus* var. *neglectus*.

Sporobolus ozarkanus is distinguished from related taxa by conspicuous papillose-based hairs on the leaf-sheaths and blades. Also, its relatively large spikelets (2.7-4.0 mm long) and grains (2.0-2.6 mm long) are characteristic of *S. vaginiflorus*, while its glabrous, short-pointed lemmas and its blunt paleas are characteristic of *S. neglectus*. Furthermore, in the Illinois material examined, the lemma and palea are black and somewhat indurate, and the embryo is black while the rest of the caryopsis is yellowish-brown.

Illinois: Clay County: edge of railroad tracks, open prairie area, 1½ miles west of Flora (NW¼ Sec 34 T3N R6E), 5 Oct. 1977, J. E. Ebinger 16648 (EJU); 13 Oct. 1980, J. E. Ebinger 20425 (EJU). Edge of railroad tracks, open prairie area, 4 miles west of Flora (NE¼ Sec 6 T2N R6E), 13 Oct. 1980, J. E. Ebinger 20423 (EJU).

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