

“Sedges (*Carex*) of Saskatchewan”

Review by Sandy Bonny

Saskatchewan's uncultivated prairie, the archetypical provincial geography, is grassland — yet many of those thin-leaves are not grasses. The sedges, or *Carex*, which have three sided blades as opposed to the round stems of grasses, have 'edges'. And they increase in abundance at edges. If you have canoed through a waterside fen, recall the rough whisper of sedge blades against your hull and paddle. Hiking or hunting in the boreal forests, sedge skirt open spaces, forming thick carpets between forest stands and providing a valuable source of forage and seed to wildlife, as well as a protected habitat for flowering and medicinal plants.

With over 103 native species the sedges are the largest genus of vascular plants in Saskatchewan, yet one of the least known and most difficult to identify. *Sedges (Carex) of Saskatchewan*, Fascicle 3 of the Flora of Saskatchewan's compendium of provincial botany, reveals the importance of the genus and its role in each of the provincial ecozones.

The volume is dedicated to John Howard Hudson (1923-2010), a botanist and educator whose detailed notes and archival specimen collection remain as a 'joy and treasure' to prairie naturalists. This book is, in fact, an updated and re-ordered revision of Hudson's *Carex in Saskatchewan* (1977) and includes many of his later taxonomic resolutions, as well as materials drawn from more recent contributions to the compiled *Flora of North America* (1993)

In this new offering, Saskatoon-based botanist Anna Leighton has organized the *Carex* taxa in a clearly keyed, plain-language guide. Detailed line drawings, identifying characteristics, distribution maps, and a botanical glossary ensure that the book will be accessible to beginners, while maintaining precise and useful information for professional surveyors. In keeping with prior publications in the series the volume is attractive and field ready, bound in a weatherproof jacket and complete with a metric ruler on the rear cover to assist with identification.

Leighton invites those who consult this guide to bring forward omissions, improvements, and novel collection locations — offering the volume as a living resource. Saskatchewan naturalists will value the guide both for its own merit in aide of identifying a little known genera, and contextual details that will inform habitat distinctions and ecological understandings presented in the Flora of Saskatchewan's showier companion guides: *Lilies, Irises and Orchids*, and the *Ferns and Fern Allies of Saskatchewan*.