

## Tallgrass Prairie Sedges and Rushes

Sedges and rushes, while more grass-like than tree-like, are often found where trees are found, in areas where water is more plentiful and soils are deeper. The phrase “sedges have edges and rushes are round” helps to differentiate these plant types from grasses, which have jointed stems. Sedges and rushes provide food for a host of wetland and woodland wildlife, such as ducks, beaver, and deer, as well as for livestock.



**Emory Sedge - 16 - 44 in.**  
*Carex emoryi*  
Flowers in: April - May



**Fescue Sedge - 12 - 36 in.**  
*Carex brevior*  
Flowers in: April - May



**Mead's Sedge - 8 - 20 in.**  
*Carex meadii*  
Flowers in: April - May



**Fox Sedge - 12 - 36 in.**  
*Carex vulpinoidea*  
Flowers in: April - June



**Heavy Sedge - 12 - 24 in.**  
*Carex gravida*  
Flowers in: April - June



**Woodland Sedge - 4 - 24 in.**  
*Carex blanda*  
Flowers in: April - June



**Long-stem Spike-rush - up to 48 in.**  
*Eleocharis palustris*  
Flowers in: April - July



**Davis Sedge - 12 - 36 in.**  
*Carex davisii*  
Flowers in: May - July



**Inland Rush - 8 - 34 in.**  
*Juncus interior*  
Flowers in: May - August



**Torrey's Rush - 8 - 32 in.**  
*Juncus torreyi*  
Flowers in: July - August



**Bottle-brush Sedge - 8 - 40 in.**  
*Carex hystericina*  
Flowers in: May - June



**Soft-stem Bulrush - 36 - 120 in.**  
*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*  
Matures: May - July



**Flat-stem Spike-sedge - 4 - 12 in.**  
*Eleocharis compressa*  
Flowers in: June - August



**Yellow Nutsedge - 6 - 30 in.**  
*Cyperus esculentus*  
Flowers in: July - August

## Useful books and websites

Great Plains Flora Association. T.M. Barkley, editor. *Flora of the Great Plains*. University Press of Kansas, 1986.  
Haddock, Michael John. *Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas: A Field Guide*. University Press of Kansas, 2005.  
Stephens, H.A., *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines in Kansas*. University Press of Kansas, 1969.  
Kansas Native Plants Society:  
[www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org)  
Kansas Wildflowers and Grasses: [www.kswildflower.org](http://www.kswildflower.org)  
United States Department of Agriculture PLANTS database: [www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov)

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## For More Information

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a public/private partnership between the National Park Service (the primary land manager) and The Nature Conservancy (the primary land owner).

The visitor center and historic Spring Hill Ranch house and barn are open daily 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and are closed most holidays. All hiking trails and all outdoor areas are open 24 hours.

To learn more, please contact the preserve at:

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve  
2480B KS Hwy 177  
Strong City, KS 66869  
Phone: 620-273-8494  
Email: [TAPR\\_Interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:TAPR_Interpretation@nps.gov)  
Web: [www.nps.gov/tapr](http://www.nps.gov/tapr)

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Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve  
Strong City, Kansas

## Common Trees, Vines, Sedges, and Rushes Found at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve



View of trees and old stone fence on Southwind Nature Trail



View of treeline along Fox Creek on Bottomland Nature Trail

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## Islands on a sea of grass

When one thinks of prairie, trees and wetlands don't often come to mind. However, these areas form an important part of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, providing both food and shelter for a wide range of tallgrass prairie animal life who would have few living options if these areas were unavailable. These rare and isolated islands on



an endless sea of tallgrass offer welcome shelter to dozens of migrating and resident bird species, as well as for many of the tallgrass prairie's larger mammals, such as white-tailed deer, skunk, bobcat, and raccoon.

A row of trees often indicates the presence of water flowing from a stream or spring, which provides many of the tallgrass prairie's amphibian, fish, and freshwater mussel populations the habitat they need to survive, making the protection of these fragile areas all the more significant.



Twenty-two tree and vine species and sixteen sedge and rush species are illustrated in this brochure, along with their average heights and flowering times, arranged alphabetically from earliest to latest.

## Tallgrass Prairie Trees and Vines

Trees, vines, and other woody plant species thrive on the tallgrass prairie in the deeper soils, more consistent moisture, and protection from fire found most readily in low areas along streams and rivers and around springs and seeps. Not only does the forest of trees provide food and shelter for wildlife in its canopy of branches and leaves, the forest floor itself teems with wildlife, who depend upon what falls from above and decomposes on the ground below for their survival.



American Elm - 40 - 98 ft.  
*Ulmus americana*  
Flowers in: March - April



Redbud - up to 25ft.  
*Cercis canadensis*  
Flowers in: March - April



Eastern Red Cedar - 30 - 40 ft.  
*Juniperus virginiana*  
Flowers in: March - May



Black Willow - 10 - 40 ft.  
*Salix nigra*  
Flowers in: April



Box Elder - 25 - 65 ft.  
*Acer negundo*  
Flowers in: April



Cottonwood - 65-130 ft.  
*Populus deltoides*  
Flowers in: April



Prickly Ash - 20 in to 16 ft.  
*Zanthoxylum americanum*  
Flowers in: April



Green Ash - 50 - 80 ft.  
*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*  
Flowers in: April - May



Pecan - 65 - 100+ ft.  
*Carya illinoensis*  
Flowers in: April - May



Western Buckeye - 3 - 12+ ft.  
*Aesculus glabra*  
Flowers in: April-May



Bur oak - 40 - 100 ft.  
*Quercus macrocarpa*  
Flowers in: April - May



Hackberry - 20 - 80+ ft.  
*Celtis occidentalis*  
Flowers in: April - May



Sycamore - 60 - 100 ft.  
*Platanus occidentalis*  
Flowers: April - May



Black Walnut - 50 - 100+ ft.  
*Juglans nigra*  
Flowers in: May



Poison Ivy - Vine 3 - 50+ ft. long  
*Toxicodendron radicans*  
Flowers in: May



Black Locust - up to 50 ft.  
*Robinia pseudo-acacia*  
Flowers in: May - June



Honey Locust - 30 - 80 ft.  
*Gleditsia triacanthos*  
Flowers in: May - June



Osage Orange - 20 - 60 ft.  
*Maclura pomifera*  
Flowers in: May - June



Bittersweet - Vine 50+ ft. long  
*Celastrus scandens*  
Flowers in: May - June



Catalpa - 30 - 98 ft.  
*Catalpa speciosa*  
Flowers in: May - June



Kentucky Coffee Tree - 30 - 75+ ft.  
*Gymnocladus dioica*  
Flowers in: May - June



Buttonbrush - 2 - 12 ft.  
*Cephalanthus occidentalis*  
Flowers in: July - August