Nutsedge

Yellow nutsedge emerges as a pale green spike, similar in appearance to a grass seedling. However, the plant is not a grass at all , and its leaf blades have no collar region, ligules, or auricles. Viewed from above, the leaves are arranged in three vertical rows (three-ranked arrangement). Grasses have a two-ranked leaf arrangement. The three-ranked leaves, triangular stem, and v-shaped leaf blades are the major identifying characteristics of the sedges. The leaf blades of all sedges are much stiffer than grass, even in the seedling stage.

Yellow nutsedge is an erect, grasslike perennial member of the sedge family. The leaves arise from a central triangular stem to form a clump that grows 1 to 3 feet (30 to 90 cm) high. Leaves are 1/8 to ½ inch (3 to 12 mm) wide, yellow-green, smooth, and shiny or waxy on the upper surface. Each leaf has a characteristic v-shape where the blade bends up along its midvein. This bend forms a distinct crease along the upper surface and a ridge along the lower surface from near the base of the sheath to the leaf tip. The lower surface of the leaf is lighter in color, dull rather than shiny, and has parallel veins.

Flower clusters (inflorescences) develop from early to late summer, when day length reaches twelve to fourteen hours. A long triangular stem arises from the center of the basal clump and produces a yellow, flat-topped flower cluster called an umbel. The umbel, which resembles an umbrella turned inside out, may grow up to 5 inches (13 cm) long and produce 1,500 seeds. In one growing season, a single seedling can develop a plant system capable of producing 90,000 seeds with 50 to 90 percent viability.

Underground tubers that form at the end of each rootlet are even more important than seeds in the reproduction of yellow nutsedge. The tubers overwinter and survive soil temperatures as low as 20° F (-5.5° C). The tuber skin contains a chemical that must be washed off by soil moisture before the tuber can sprout. Therefore, yellow nutsedge does well on wet land.

In the northern United States, tubers sprout from late May until mid-July. When a shoot reaches the surface, it forms a basal bulb. Within three weeks, a new plant grows from this bulb, including roots that develop new tubers at their ends. In a single year, the outward growth of rhizomes from one tuber can produce 1,900 new plants and 7,000 new tubers, covering an area 6 feet (1.8 m) in diameter. Although frost kills all top growth, most of the viable tubers will sprout the following spring. Tubers do not last longer than three years in the soil.

ellow Nutsedge (Cyperus esculentus L.) is a common weed found in many home lawns and other turfgrass areas in Ohio. The color, growth habit, and rapid growth rate make yellow nutsedge a prominent distraction in the aesthetics of high quality lawns. In addition to home lawns, this weed is also a significant problem in the turfgrass areas of parks, industrial grounds, athletic fields, and golf courses.

Plant Description