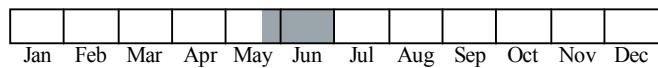


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State Distribution



Best Survey Period

**Status:** State extirpated

**Global and state rank:** GHQ/SX

**Other common names:** spear-like blue-eyed-grass.

**Family:** Iridaceae (Iris family)

**Taxonomy:** Similar to *Sisyrinchium farwellii* Bickn., this species is known only from the type collection, made in Michigan by O. A. Farwell in 1896, and is of questionable origin and distinction. Farwell noted on one collection sheet that the plant was “very rare” and “perhaps only a stray immigrant”. Bicknell (1899) considered it to be a very distinct plant not closely related to other Michigan species. Britton and Brown (1913) suggested that this species closely resembles the Mexican *S. pringlei* Robinson & Greenman. The possibility also remains that *S. hastile* represents a garden escape. In the treatment of *Sisyrinchium* by A.F. Cholewa and D.M. Henderson in the Flora of North America (FNA 2002), *S. hastile* is reduced to synonymy with *S. albidum*, and thus the single collection of this putative taxon is perhaps best considered to be an aberrant individual of a common but variable species.

**Total range:** The sole collection of this blue-eyed-grass was made on Belle Isle in the Detroit River in Wayne County.

**Recognition:** Plants of *S. hastile* are **dull green, erect, and quite slender**, ranging from 30-40 cm in height and “apparently little if at all tufted” (Bicknell 1899). **The stems are slightly roundish to at best somewhat compressed, but not strongly flattened and 2-winged.** Flowers are borne in a loose cluster terminating the simple stem, arising from an **erect, leaf-like (involucral) bract and a series of smaller bracts (the 2 spathes) that are stalkless**. The inner spathe (which like the outer consists of a pair of bracts) **has 2-3 cm long bracts**. *S. albidum*, a relatively common species of southern Lower Michigan, usually has shorter inner spathe bracts and anthers 2.5 mm long or less (the anthers are longer in *S. hastile*). *S. mucronatum* and *S. montanum*, which are also similar, have only 1 spathe, and unlike *S. hastile*, have the basal margins of the involucral bract fused beyond the edge or wing of the stem.

**Best survey time/phenology:** The date of this collection was June 2. According to Voss (1972) the specimens lack mature flowers or fruit, thus it could be



presumed that the survey period for this species (its legitimacy notwithstanding) would be late May through June.

**Habitat:** The collection data only note that the specimen was found on “the sandy shores of Belle Isle”, in an area which was subsequently modified through the placement of an artificial lake (Farwell 1902).

**Biology:** *Sisyrinchium* comprises a group of perennial herbs that arise from well developed horizontal rhizomes.

**Conservation/management:** This blue-eyed-grass has not been observed since 1896, and its distinctiveness appears to be highly questionable. Specialists should be consulted in order to ascertain whether status surveys have merit whatsoever, particularly considering the fact that much of southeastern Michigan is now developed. It should be emphasized that the general site of its collection, Belle Isle, is a large river island, and despite that fact that it is heavily used for recreation, some limited but significant areas of natural vegetation remain, included areas with newly documented rare plant species, including *Fraxinus profunda* (pumpkin ash) and *Quercus shumardii* (Shumard oak).

**Comments:** Voss (1972) retained this species in the state flora such that additional potential collections could be obtained to assist in resolving its status.

### Selected references:

Bicknell, E. P. 1899. Studies in *Sisyrinchium*. II - Four new species from Michigan. Bull. Torrey Bot. Club 26:297-300.

Farwell, O.A. 1902. Rep. Mich. Acad. 2: 32-33.

Flora of North America Editorial Committee. 2002. *Flora of North America North of Mexico*. Volume 26. *Magnoliophyta: Liliidae: Liliales and Orchidales*

Voss, E. G. 1972. Michigan Flora. Part I. Gymnosperms and Monocots. Bull. Cranbrook Inst. Sci. 55 and Univ. of Michigan Herbarium. xv + 488 pp.

### Abstract citation:

M.R. Penskar and S.R. Crispin. 2004. Special plant abstract for *Sisyrinchium hastile* (blue-eyed-grass). Michigan Natural Features Inventory. Lansing, MI. 2 pp.

