

First Report of *Tridens strictus* (Nuttall) Nash (Poaceae) from Kentucky

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of *Tridens strictus* (Nuttall) Nash (Poaceae) in Todd County, Kentucky is reported. This is the first record of the species in the state, representing a range extension from contiguous states.

The genus *Tridens* Roemer and Schultz (*Triodia* R. Brown) includes a group of perennial grasses (Poaceae; Festuceae) from America and Australia (Fernald 1950). Kentucky vascular flora checklists by McFarland (1942) and Braun (1943), as well as more recent manuals (Fernald 1950, Hitchcock 1950, Radford, Ahles, and Bell 1968, Godfrey and Wooten 1979), record only one species, *T. flavus* (L.) Hitchcock, from Kentucky. A second species, *T. strictus* (Nuttall) Nash, is reported here as an addition to the known Kentucky flora.

Tridens strictus is a caespitose perennial with stout, erect culms up to 1.5 m high. The panicles are dense, contracted, and spike-like, 1-3 dm long and 1-2 cm thick. As noted by Mohlenbrock (1973), except for the purplish spikelets and characters of the lemmas, this species in no way resembles the more common *T. flavus*. The habitat, as described in regional manuals, is usually moist, open woods and pine savannahs eastward and moist to wet prairies and fields or open woodlands westward.

The distribution of *T. strictus* is generally reported to be from Virginia southward to Florida, westward to Texas, and northward to Illinois. Its apparent infrequency in many areas is noted by Sharp et al. (1956) for Tennessee, Radford, Ahles, and Bell (1968) for the Carolinas, Mohlenbrock (1973) for Illinois, and Correll and Correll (1975) for Texas and

Oklahoma. However, Steyermark (1963) indicated a rather general distribution in southern Missouri.

In the summer and fall of 1980, *T. strictus* was found in abundance around ponded cinder areas of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad switching yards and in vacant lots within the city limits of Guthrie, Todd County. In wet, recently cleared fields just east of Guthrie, *T. strictus* occurred in dense stands, frequently overtopping such common associates as *Erechtites hieracifolia*, *Hibiscus moscheutos*, *Leersia oryzoides*, *Pluchea camphorata*, *Rhynchospora corniculata*, and *Verbena hastata*. A few plants were also observed in less recently disturbed areas along fencerows and railroad rights-of-way. It is assumed that these plants provided the seed source for the recently cleared areas. While it is obvious that recent disturbance and clearing provided a suitable habitat for establishment of the large and dense stands observed, it is unknown whether or not the Kentucky populations are the result of recent invasions. In any event, *T. strictus* is well established in southern Kentucky and should be considered a part of the state's flora.

Voucher specimens are on deposit in the herbarium of Austin Peay State University (APSU) with the following data: Todd County, Kentucky; 10 Sept., 1980, L. and N. Railroad switching yard, south Guthrie, Scott and Chester, 4497; 10

Sept., 1980, wet, recently cleared sections of Guthrie Swamp, Scott and Chester, 4499.

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