



SIZE: 10-50 cm tall.

LEAVES: Stiff, erect, flat, 10-25 cm long, 2-15 mm wide, and with a smooth surface. They grow in a fan-like cluster (rosette) at the base of the plant and are usually at least half the height of the plant.

STEM: The flower stalk (scape) is straight, round at the bottom, and flattened near the top with two prominent ridges. It grows directly from the ground and bears no leaves.

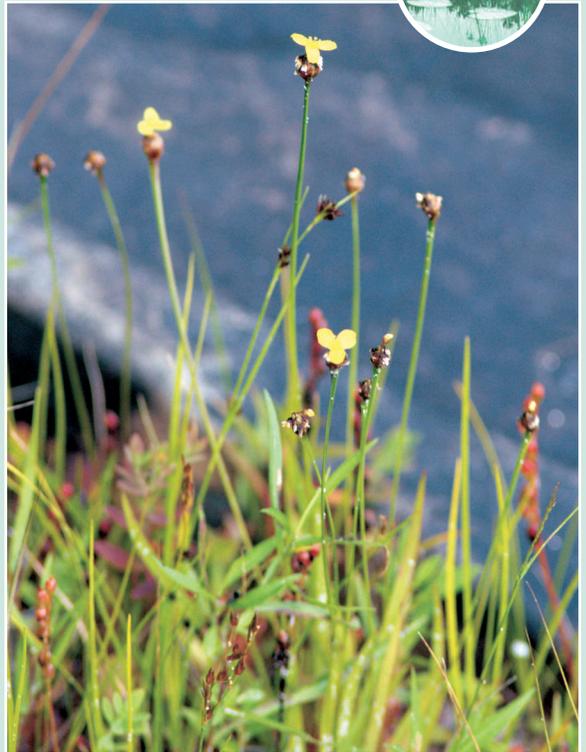
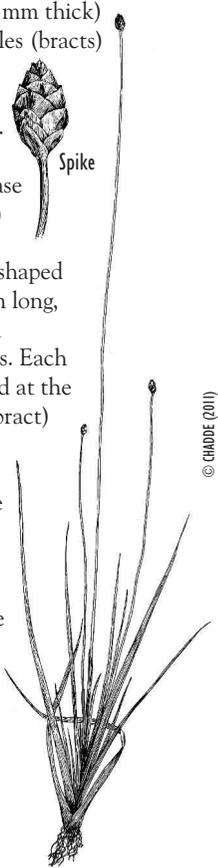
FLOWERS: Small, yellow and found at the top of the flower stalk (scape). They are three parted, with 3 showy wedge-shaped petals (4 mm long) and 3 finely frayed stamens. The flowers emerge one (or few) at a time from an oval spike (8-10 mm thick) composed of scales (bracts) that are light brown with greenish centers.

Each flower is located at the base of a scale (bract) in the spike.

FRUITS: Oval shaped capsules, 0.5 mm long, containing small translucent seeds. Each capsule is located at the base of a scale (bract) in the spike.

NOTES:

The base may be slightly reddish or purple. It can often be found growing with the very similar Northern Yellow-eyed Grass (*Xyris montana*).



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Flower emerging from the spike



Yellow flower © ALAIN BELLIVEAU



Brown scales with greenish centers

Habitat: Sand, peat or gravel lakeshores, floating bog mats, peaty wetlands and barrens.

Interesting point: The genus *Xyris* contains about 250 species, but only 21 occur in North America and only 2 are found in Canada. The plant is highly variable in leaf size and flower shape and is even referred to by another common name: Variable Yellow-eyed Grass!

Similar species: The very similar Northern Yellow-eyed Grass (*Xyris montana*) is usually less than 25 cm tall and has shorter, narrower leaves (5-15 cm long and 1-2 mm wide). The flowering spikes are smaller (3-6 mm thick) and have scales (bracts) that are uniformly brown lacking a central greenish stripe.