

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Plant Abstract**

**Element Code:** PMIRI0D0B0

**Data Sensitivity:** No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Sisyrinchium cernuum* (Bickn.) Kearney  
**COMMON NAME:** Nodding Blueeyed Grass, Nodding Blue-eyed Grass  
**SYNONYMS:** *Hydastylus cernuus* E. P. Bicknell, *Sisyrinchium powellii* M. J. Warnock  
**FAMILY:** Iridaceae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** Kearney, T. H. 1949. Leafl. W. Bot. 5(12): 197.  
(*Hydastylus cernuus*: Bicknell, E. P. 1900. Bull. Torrey bot. Club 27(7): 384-385).

**TYPE LOCALITY:**

**TYPE SPECIMEN:**

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** The genus *Sisyrinchium* contains approximately 70 species in the western hemisphere (Hickman 1993). Five species of *Sisyrinchium* are recognized by Cholewa (1993) as occurring in Arizona.

**DESCRIPTION:** Perennial/apparently annual, herb with grass-like leaves 1.5-4.5 mm wide, about 35-40 mm long. The roots are fibrous. Erect stems 0.5-2 mm wide, to about 20 cm (40 mm) tall. The margins entire to slightly minutely dentate, the surface glabrous. Spathe bracts with the dorsal keel entire; outer bracts 14-41 mm long, tapering evenly to the apex, the margins connate basally 3.3-5 mm; inner bract 10-15 mm long, the hyaline margin narrow to moderately wide, ending at the apex, the base straight to slightly curved as it emerges from the outer bract. Flowers small, funnel-shaped, pale yellow or orange, 3-5 mm long. The petals bear darker brownish lines (veins). The pedicels are recurved in fruit, glabrous, at anthesis equaling or longer than the inner bract; tepals 2.6-5 mm long. Anthers 0.5-1.6 mm long; filaments united at the base; ovary glabrous. Fruits are pale to dark brown, 3-6(8) mm long, generally nearly spherical, rather fragile capsules, nodding. Seeds are 0.9-1.1 mm long, hemispherical with a deep depression on the flattened side, the surface reticulate (Cholewa et al. 1993).

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** Can be readily distinguished from *Hydastylus schaffneri* by its much broader leaves, elongated primary bracts and much smaller flowers with very short anthers and recurved pedicels (Bicknell, 1900). Distinguishable from *S. longipes*, in that *S. cernuum* has recurved (vs. erect) pedicels, a much smaller perianth (3-5 mm vs. 8-12 mm), smaller anthers (0.5-1.6 mm vs. 2-3 mm) and smaller tepals (less than 5 mm vs. greater than 8 mm). In addition, *S. longipes* tends to be found at higher elevations; greater than 7,500 feet

(2288 meters). In Mexico, *S. tinctorium* differs from *S. cernuum* by being mainly larger in size, especially its longer and broader leaves (Martin et al 1998).

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Color Photo (Rickett et al. 1970 ).

**TOTAL RANGE:** Southeastern Arizona, west Texas (Trans-Pecos Region) and Mexico (Ags., Chih., Dgo., Gto., Jal., Sin.).

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Cochise County: Happy Valley Road, also Rincon, Mule and Chiricahua Mountains; Santa Cruz County: Pajarito, Santa Rita and Atascosa Mountains, and Sycamore Canyon; Pima County: Rincon Mountains.

### **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**GROWTH FORM:** Herbaceous forb/herb perennial/apparently annual (Cholewa et al. 1993).\*

**PHENOLOGY:** March - September.

#### **BIOLOGY:**

**HABITAT:** Along streams in partial shade; canyon bottoms. Wet soil by seeps, pools and springs in desertscrub (Bowers et al. ). Also found on sandy stream banks (Martin et al. 1998). Equally likely to occur in wetlands or non-wetlands (USDA Internet Plants Database, 1999).

**ELEVATION:** 3,300 feet to about 8,000 feet (1,007 - 2,440 meters), per Cholewa et al. 1993.

**EXPOSURE:**

**SUBSTRATE:**

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Desert Grassland and Pine-Oak Woodland.

**POPULATION TRENDS:**

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:**

**STATE STATUS:**

**OTHER STATUS:**

Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 1999)

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:****PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:****SUGGESTED PROJECTS:**

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** USFS Coronado National Forest, NPS Saguaro National Park.

**SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION****LITERATURE CITATIONS:**

- Bicknell, E. P. 1900. Studies in *Sisyrinchium*-VIII: *Sisyrinchium Californicum* and Related Species of the Neglected Genus *Hydastylus*. Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club. 27(7):384-385.
- Bowers, J. E., and S. P. McLaughlin. Flora and Vegetation of the Rincon Mountains, Pima County, Arizona. p. 104.
- Cholewa, A. F., and D. M. Henderson. 1993. A New Flora For Arizona in Preparation. Journal of the Arizona-Nevada Academy of Science. Vol. 27(2): 216.
- Hickman, J. C. ed. 1993. The Jepson manual, higher plants of California. University of California Press. Berkeley. p. 1155.
- Kearney, T .H., R. H. Peebles with collaborators. 1960. Arizona flora. Second Edition. University of California Press. Berkeley. p. 197.
- Martin, P. S., Yetman, D., Fishbein, M., Jenkins, P., Van Devender, T. R., and R. K. Wilson. 1998. Gentry's Rio Mayo Plants. The University of Arizona Press. Tucson. p. 488.
- Rickett, H. W. and collaborators. 1970. Wildflowers of the United States. Volume Four Part one of three. McGraw-Hill Book Company. New York. p. 60-61.
- USDA, Forest Service Region 3. 1999. Regional Forester's Sensitive Species List.
- USDA NRCS. 1999. The PLANTS database (<http://plants.usda.gov/plants>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA. 70874-4490 USA.

**MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:****ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

\*According to Martin et al. (1998), *Sisyrinchium cernuum* is an annual, but in the USDA Plants Internet Database, *Sisyrinchium cernuum* is considered to be a perennial.

“Perhaps not distinct from the more robust *S. tintorium*” (Martin et al. 1998).

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