INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

Purple nutsedge
(*Cyperus rotundus*)

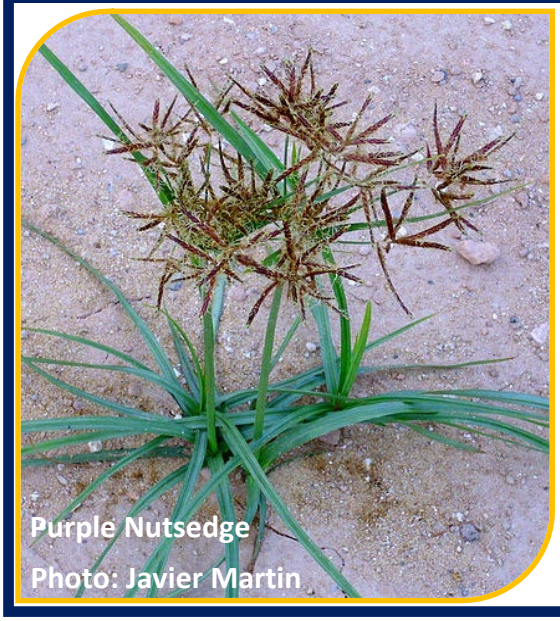
Purple nutsedge spikelet
Photo: Argo Navis

Have You Seen This Plant?

Description

- Native to southern and central Europe, southern Asia, and Africa.
- Perennial sedge, 30-60 cm tall, with erect, solid stems that are triangular at the cross section.
- Leaves grow from the base in groups of 3.
- Leaves are dark green, shiny, hairless and have a distinct ridge along the midvein.
- Flowers are reddish-purple to reddish-brown spikelets that are arranged in umbrella-like clusters with leaf-like bracts situated under the clusters.
- The root system consists of rhizomes with many tubers. The tubers are often connected in chains, oblong shaped and covered in reddish scales.
- Seedlings are rare since most plants develop from the tubers. When seedlings are discovered, the leaves are like the mature plants but smaller and usually paler.

Primary Threats: Purple nutsedge is difficult to control due to its rapid growth and formation of dense colonies. It can outcompete native vegetation due to its extensive rhizomatous root system and rapid growth.


Purple Nutsedge
Photo: Javier Martin

Biology & Spread

- Plants produce many flowers but few nutlets. Vegetative reproduction is the main mode of spread.
- The tubers can be spread by erosion, movement of water in streams and nursery containers.
- A single tuber has been recorded producing 600 additional plants in a single year. Tubers can live 3 or more years.
- Nutlets of purple nutsedge have been discovered in imported ornamental nursery stock.

For more information:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species/priority-species/priority-plants

BRITISH COLUMBIA

January 2026

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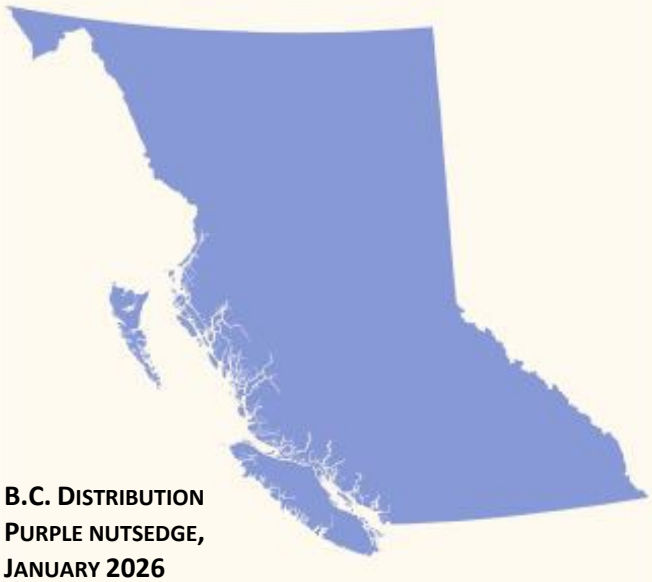

B.C. Distribution Purple nutsedge, January 2026

Habitat

- Purple nutsedge is well adapted to moist conditions and sandy soils such as ditches.
- It can rapidly colonize pastures, cultivated fields, turf, and ornamental gardens.
- The plant can grow in a wide range of humidity, soil type, altitude, pH, high temperatures and soil moisture.
- Salinity and cold temperatures (-5°C) are limiting factors to growth.

Distribution & Status

- Not yet detected in BC but infestations are distributed throughout the Southern United States, Arizona, and California
- Management goal is to prevent introduction.

Report Invasive Species

Download the App!

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

Purple nutsedge patch
Photo: University of Missouri

What Can You Do?

- **REPORT** new sightings
- **Check** ornamental plant orders for nutlets.
- **Remove** all tubers when mechanically treating
- **Treat** purple nutsedge before disturbing as site by digging, mowing or machinery

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