

Worldwide distribution, but found especially in cooler, wetter habitats. In our area, they are often the dominant species in wet, marshy sites.

'Grassy' perennials with fibrous roots and/or creeping rhizomes. The stems are often triangular in X-section (sedges have edges), but otherwise stem and leaves may be very similar to grasses with the exception that sedges do not have ligules and the leaf sheaths are closed. Flowers are simple, inconspicuous, and subtended by a single bract or scale. Flowers, in turn, are arranged in spikelets which display a variety of panicle types. In *Carex*, the primary genus in our area, the bracts (scales) and the perigynium, the vase-like structure that surrounds the ovary, are important for determination to species.

In your area: *Carex* (Sedges), *Eriophorum* (Cottongrass), *Eleocharis* (Spike Rush), and *Trichophorum*.

New words: perigynium, beak of perigynium, perianth bristles, bracts, brachlets. spike, culm, scale.

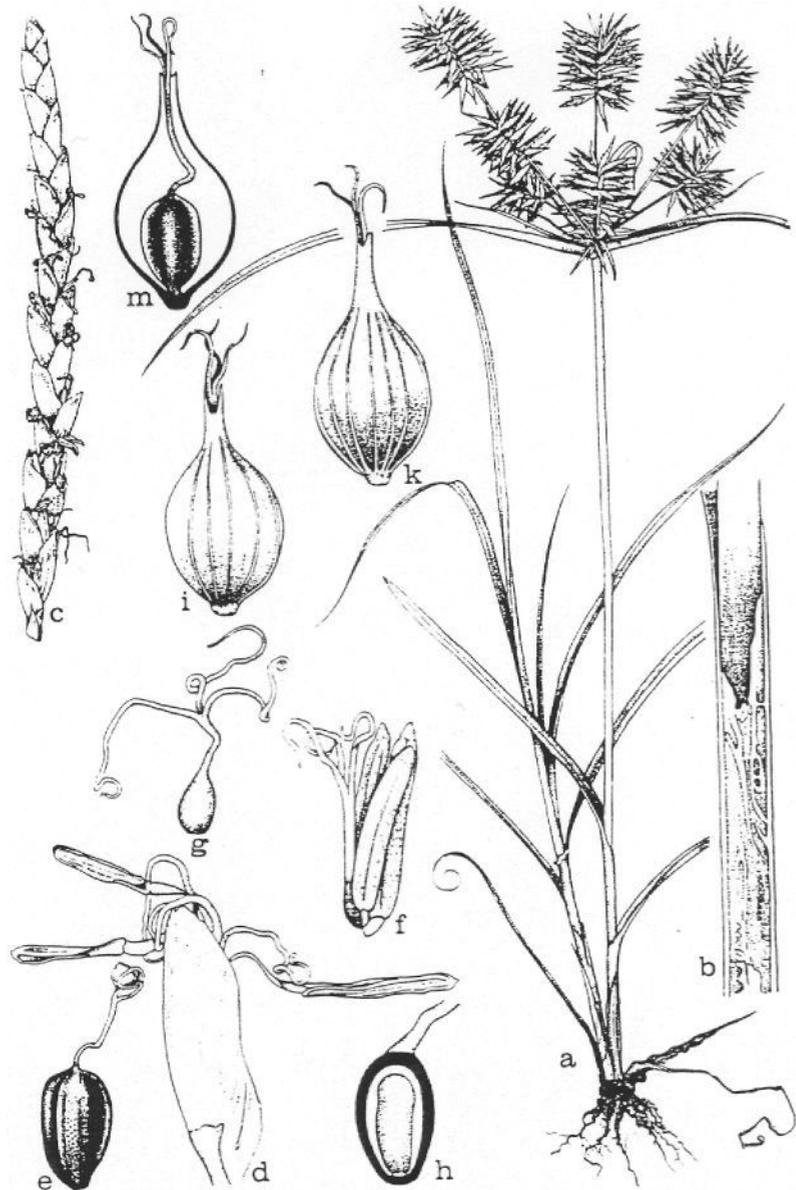


Fig. 9.7 Cyperaceae. a-h, *Cyperus esculentus* L. a. habit, x 1/2; b. portion of stem and leaf-sheath, x 3; c. spikelet, x 4; d. scale and flower, x 16; e. achene, x 12; f. flower, from the side, with the scale removed, x 16; g. pistil, x 16; h. schematic **long-section** of ovary, x 32. i-m. *Carex rostrata* Stokes. i, k. two views of perigynium, with achene enclosed, x 6. m. schematic long-section of perigynium, with achene enclosed, x 6.