



# Yellow and Purple Nutsedge

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**Frank Sholedice**, Research Associate &  
**Mark Renz**, Extension Weed Scientist



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Yellow and purple nutsedge. *Cyperus esculentus* and *C. rotundus*, are non-native grass-like perennial plants that have triangular stems, grass-like leaves that grow in three vertical rows, and small underground “nutlets” or tubers that grow from the rhizomes. The plants’ appearance can vary greatly based on environmental conditions. Nutsedges are quite troublesome and difficult to control, often forming dense infestations. Yellow nutsedge is also known as chufa, earth almond, and rush nut; purple nutsedge is also known as coco sedge or grass; both species are also known as nutgrass.



Purple nutsedge



Yellow nutsedge

Both plants have erect stems that are green, three sided, and appear triangular in cross-section. Yellow nutsedge stems can grow to 3 ft. tall while purple nutsedge stems can grow to 16 in. tall. The leaves grow from the base of the plant and are arranged in three vertical rows. Yellow nutsedge leaves are often longer than the stems while purple nutsedge’s are shorter; both are about 0.10-0.35 in. wide. The leaves of both plants are light to dark

green, hairless, glossy, often with a raised midvein, and form a sheath that extends down the stem.



Yellow nutsedge



Purple nutsedge

Both plants produce leaf-like bracts at the ends of the stems just below the flower structures. The flower structures consist of several small branches, each 0.2-1.2 in. long, with up to 40 small grass-like seeds per branch. Yellow nutsedge branches are

straw-colored to brown, while purple nutsedge branches are reddish, purple, or brown. Both plants produce deep roots, rhizomes, and distinct tubers. Yellow nutsedge tubers grow at the ends of rhizomes, are mostly round, 0.1-0.6 in diameter, hard, brown to black in color, and smooth (but with scales when immature). Purple nutsedge tubers grow in chains along the rhizomes; they are oblong to round but often irregular in shape, 0.1-1.0 in. long by about 0.3 in. thick, and covered with red to brown papery scales. Both plants reproduce vegetatively from tubers; yellow nutsedge can also reproduce from seed.



Yellow nutsedge tuber

#### Management:

- Physical removal must remove as many roots, rhizomes, and tubers as possible
- Frequent mowing or deep cultivation can drain tubers of stored energy prevent new growth
- Herbicides can suppress nutsedge growth.