

**Check It Before You Accept It!**

# Native *Juncus effusus* VS. non-native subspecies

Non-native subspecies of *Juncus effusus* are often confused with native *Juncus effusus* ssp. *pacificus* (Pacific rush) and mistakenly planted in natural areas and green streets. Non-native *Juncus effusus* ssp. *effusus* (soft rush) is listed as a Nuisance Plant on the Portland Plant List and cannot be planted in environmental zones or city-required landscaping. Non-native *Juncus effusus* ssp. *solutus* (Nova Scotia rush) is not yet listed as a Nuisance Plant, but should be avoided.

**Inspect all *Juncus effusus* shipments and accept only the clearly native subspecies.**

**When accepting a delivery, check:**

☐ **STEP 1. Are leaf sheaths shorter than 20 cm?**



Go to next step.



**REJECT.**



☐ **STEP 2. Are leaf sheath margins asymmetrical and not tapered?"**



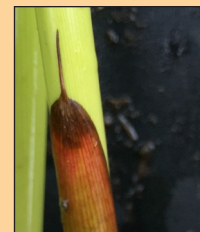
Go to next step.



**REJECT.**



*J. effusus* ssp. *pacificus*



*J. effusus* ssp. *solutus*

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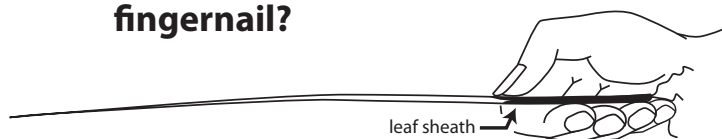
☐ **STEP 3. Is the leaf sheath margin thick enough to be felt with a fingernail?**



Accept.



**REJECT.**



*J. effusus* ssp. *pacificus*



*J. effusus* ssp. *solutus*

**OTHER USEFUL CHARACTERISTICS:** The leaf sheaths of our native *Juncus effusus* (left) are wrapped tightly around the stem and only pull away slightly, if at all, when the stem is bent. Also notice the late-season (June-Sept.), dark brown margins on the leaf sheaths of the native subspecies. Sheaths of both non-native *Juncus effusus* subspecies appear tapered, are loosely wrapped, and usually separate from the stem when the stem is bent.

**If in doubt, contact the Environmental Services Invasive Species Program at 503-823-4899 to coordinate an inspection of a plant delivery.**



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
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PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION  
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

# Native *Juncus effusus* VS. non-native subspecies

## Background

*Juncus effusus* ssp. *pacificus*, commonly known as Pacific rush, is native to the Pacific Northwest. While this species is desirable in natural areas, it is often confused with two non-native subspecies in the Portland Metro area. *Juncus effusus* ssp. *effusus* (soft rush) and *Juncus effusus* ssp. *solutus* (Nova Scotia rush) were introduced from Europe and the East Coast, respectively (Zika 2003).

## Why does it matter?

Non-native *Juncus effusus* subspecies display different growth structures than our native subspecies, and are weedy and often form monocultures, both of which have implications for wildlife habitat. Both non-native subspecies are established in the Metro area and are being sold by regional nurseries as “native” *Juncus effusus* or Pacific rush – often alongside the native. To continue to use valuable *Juncus effusus* ssp. *pacificus* in restoration projects, it is critical that these subspecies can be properly identified by land managers, bureau staff, and nursery personnel.



- REFERENCES** Christy, J.A., A. Kimpo, V. Marttala, P.K. Gaddis, and N.L. Christy. 2009. Urbanizing flora of Portland, Oregon, 1806-2008. Native Plant Society of Oregon Occasional Paper 3:1-309.
- Meyers, S.C. T. Jaster, K.E. Mitchell, and L.K. Hardison, eds. 2015. Flora of Oregon. Volume 1: Pteridophytes, gymnosperms, and monocots. Fort Worth, TX: Botanical Research Institute of Texas.
- Zika, P. 2003. The native subspecies of *Juncus effusus* (Juncaceae) in western North America. *Brittonia* 55:150-156.
- Zika, P. 2013. A synopsis of the *Juncus hesperius* group (Juncaceae, Juncotypus) and their hybrids in western North America. *Brittonia* 62:128-141.