

Isolepis cernua (Vahl) Roemer & Schult., LOW CLUB RUSH. Aquatic annual or perennial herb, emergent, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, many-stemmed at base, cespitose, forming a densely compact, hemispheric cushion, in range 4–20 cm tall; shoots 1–3-leaved, glabrous; rhizomes \pm vertical or spreading, condensed with very short internodes, producing numerous aboveground shoots and a dense tangle of fibrous, adventitious roots, white, with internodes covered by brownish, partially degraded leaf sheaths. **Stems:** cylindrical, nearly threadlike, 0.2–0.5 mm diameter, becoming compressed side-to-side approaching inflorescence, green but pale green at base, \pm smooth. **Leaves:** alternate, simple and highly reduced with sheath; sheath closed, cylindrical, typically 6–13 mm long, membranous and pale green becoming reddish or rose-colored along veins, parallel-veined with 3 veins continuing into blade; ligule absent; blade typically present, lanceolate-linear, mostly 1.3–8.5 \times 0.2–0.4 mm, $<$ sheath, green, entire (if $>$ sheath margins overlapping), bluntly acute at tip. **Inflorescence:** solitary spike of sessile 1-flowered “spikelets,” terminal, ovoid, 2.3–5 \times 1.2–1.5 mm, 5–15-flowered, flowers helically alternate, each flower (spikelet) subtended by a scalelike bractlet, bractlets overlapping, glabrous; involucre bract of spike appearing as a continuation of stem, partially sheathing spike, erect, in range 2.8–4.5 mm long, green, the 1–1.5 mm at base expanded to 0.8 mm, membranous, above basal portion \pm cylindrical or slightly grooved on upper side, \pm 0.3 mm diameter; bractlet subtending flower \pm obovate to roundish and cupped around flower, 1.2–1.5 mm long, mostly tannish and membranous to scarious but green and herbaceous along midrib, entire, rounded to obtuse or acute and sometimes short-pointed at tip, 3–11-veined, the midvein \pm thick and convexly raised on outer surface face from base to tip, becoming brownish to reddish (orange) in fruit and weakly keeled at tip. **Flower:** bisexual, \pm radial, nonshowy; **perianth** (bristles) absent; **stamens** in range 3, on bractlet side of ovary, free, included; filaments flat, 1.2–1.5 mm long, slightly wider approaching tip, tannish, glabrous; anthers basifixed, dithecal, narrowly triangular, in range 0.3–0.4 mm long, light yellow, with a triangular, colorless sterile appendage at tip, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, compressed-ellipsoid, \pm 0.7 mm long, greenish, beaked at tip, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style included, 3-branched from very short base, the branches ascending, $<$ ovary, tannish orange. **Fruit:** achene, falling separately from bractlet, obovoid to ellipsoid and short-beaked, 0.8–1 \times 0.7–0.8 mm, compressed-triangular or thickly biconvex in \times -section, convex on faces but the widest face nearly flat (slightly concave), medium to dark brown or straw-colored, fine cobblestonelike with minute points or dotted on faces, often with thin, whitish surface layer, the lateral angles prominent but 1 angle sometimes obscure. Late May–early September.

Native. A cushionlike (tufted), emergent aquatic herb growing on continuously wet, moss-covered or algae-covered, sandy soils at freshwater seeps, freshwater marsh, tidal flats, and coastal salt marsh. *Isolepis cernua*, formerly known as *Scirpus cernuus*, forms dense clumps, which in range appear to be perennial when kept wet year-round. Our specimens never grow as robust as reported in the literature, so that local plants are dwarf with short leaves. In sedges, the primary inflorescence is traditionally termed a “spikelet,” and for many Cyperaceae there are two or more of these spikelets grouped as a cluster. In *I. cernua* there is only one ovoid structure, and for convenience we prefer to call the

reproductive structure a spike composed of sessile flowers, each having evolved from a lateral branch becoming highly reduced and with only one flower remaining.
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