

Juncus balticus Willd. var. *montanus* Engelm., MOUNTAIN RUSH. Perennial herb, clonal, rhizomatous, initially erect becoming ascending or sometimes prostrate at end of growing season, shoots (25–)35–143(–150) cm long but plants < 100 cm tall; shoots with green, photosynthetic stems and 2–7 sheathing, basal leaves, glabrous; rhizomes horizontal and long-creeping, 25–100 mm below ground, generally unbranched, mostly 2.5–4 mm diameter, with shoots spaced to congested along axis, having appressed, deltate scales. **Stems (culms):** compressed-oblong to \pm elliptic in \times -section, 1.5–3.5 mm wide, tough, fibrous, twisted, smooth or faintly striped; solid, white. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, sheath generally without blades (cataphyll); sheath open, to 2–90(–150) mm long, fibrous, with nonoverlapping margins on shorter lower cataphylls or overlapping to above midpoint (upper leaves), membranous on margins, rounded and commonly with short tip < 2.5 mm long (caudate), sometimes 2-lobed, parallel-veined, initially green becoming tannish on unexposed portion and brown on exposed portion, sometimes glossy brown (lacquered); blade (if present) resembling stem, cylindrical, 50–400+ mm long, sometimes = inflorescence height, with sheath margin curved into blade. **Inflorescence:** panicle, terminal but appearing lateral, generally open, 7–28-flowered, 25–62 \times 5–35 mm, with ascending to arching branches to 8 mm long, bracteate (including prophylls), glabrous; the lowest bract subtending panicle stemlike, with narrowly slitlike sheath, 3–5 mm long, blade (15–)100–340 mm long; other branches much shorter (< 7.5 mm long) and decreasing upward with or without reduced blade, sheath 1.5–3.5 mm long, blade < 4 mm long and decreasing upward often reduced to a point (mucronate) or tail-like at tip (caudate); prophyll in axil of branch, to 4.2 mm long at first node decreasing upward, 2-veined, membranous or having membranous margins, truncate or 2-lobed at tip; bractlets (bracteoles) subtending pedicel 2, ovate-deltate, 1.5–2 mm long, upper bracteole broader than lower bracteole and nearly encircling flower, membranous and semi-translucent, 1-veined or faintly 3-veined; pedicel ca. 0.3 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 1.5 mm across, nonshowy, closed; **tepals** 6 in 2 somewhat different whorls, erect, acuminate-lanceolate, at anthesis in range 3.5–5 \times 0.8–1.1 mm at anthesis, of outer whorl to 0.5 mm > inner tepals and generally narrower, green with whitish scarious margins, acuminate at tip, 1-veined, persistent; **stamens** 6 in 2 whorls, free, opposite tepals, included; filaments << anther, in range 0.3–0.5 mm long, whitish; anthers basifixed, dithecal, \pm linear, in range 1.5–2 \times 0.3 mm, light yellow, 2-lobed and sometimes slightly flared at base, narrowly rounded to slightly notched at tip, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, 2–3.5 mm long; ovary superior, ellipsoid, 1–1.3 \times 0.6–1 mm, 3-lobed, greenish, 1-chambered with 20–40 ovules on each of 3 placentae; style 3-branched, basal portion in range 0.9–1.3 mm long, the stigmatic branches ca. 2–3 mm long. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, 3-valved, several–100+-seeded, ovoid to obovoid and \pm 3-sided, in range 2.8–4 \times 1.6–2 mm, < perianth, yellowish ochre or tan, with fine point 0.3–0.5 mm long at tip (apiculate), valves indented at septum and slightly ribbed along sutures, with persistent style base. **Seed:** \pm ovoid, in range 0.5–0.9 \times 0.3–0.6 mm (larger seeds in few-seeded capsules), golden brown to brown, weakly netlike, pointed at base but lacking tail (appendage), surface forming a longitudinal ridge from base to tip. Early June–early July.

Native. Perennial herb occurring occasionally as a clone in open meadow that tends to have moist soil during springtime. *Juncus balticus* var. *montanus* is also referred to as *J.*

mexicanus, *J. balticus* var. *mexicanus*, *J. balticus* subsp. *ater*, and a form of *J. arcticus*, and nomenclature for our form is highly problematic. We treat these plants as one variable form because our populations have characteristics of two varieties: our plants are generally bladeless, typical of var. *montanus*, but have compressed, twisted stems, typical of var. *mexicanus*. The upper cataphylls of *J. mexicanus* (*Juncus balticus* subsp *mexicanus*) generally have a stemlike blade and the stem compressed and twisted, up to seven hundred millimeter long and less than three millimeter wide.

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