

Juncus phaeocephalus Engelm. var. *paniculatus* Engelm., PANICLED RUSH. Perennial herb, clonal, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, cespitose with tufts unequally spaced along creeping rhizome, ascending 20–90 cm tall; shoots with 2 basal leaves and 1–2 cauline leaves, strongly flattened like *Iris* having blades flat with edge toward stem, upper leaves overlapped by other lower leaves (equitant); rhizomes horizontal, 30–50 mm belowground, well-developed and highly branched, 2–4 mm diameter, younger growth covered with scales, the scales deltoid, 4–6 mm long, grayish brown, membranous, veiny; cataphylls at base of stem generally 2, 5–55 × 4.5–7 mm, membranous on margins, acute at tip, grayish tan. **Stems (culms):** short on vegetative shoots, on fertile shoot to 500 mm long (excluding peduncle), compressed, 1.7–3.5(–5) mm wide, tough, photosynthetic internodes 15–50 mm long (on fertile shoot), striped-veiny, glabrous. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; sheath open, 95–230 mm long, parallel-veined, with non-overlapping membranous margins, glabrous, lacking lobes (auricles) at top; blade linear, 175–290 × 2.7–3 mm, entire, ca. 12-veined with 3 veins prominent with cross septa (cauline leaves), glabrous. **Inflorescence:** panicle of heads, terminal (appearing so), open, panicle loosely hemispheric to spheric or ellipsoid, 90–100 mm across, of 10–many heads, branched 2–3×, heads 5.5–8 mm tall, 8.5–11.5 mm wide, 7–12-flowered, bracteate at each fork, glabrous; bract at end of culm subtending first branch of inflorescence 30 × 2 mm, ± leaflike, blade tapered from base to narrowly acute tip, accompanied by small prophyll; branches ascending to widely spreading, 10–60 mm long, decreasing upward, having a terminal head but also sometimes with branchlets arising within head, alternate on axis with small prophyll; bracts subtending head 0–2, awl-shaped to narrowly ovate, 4–7 mm long, membranous, encircling axis at base, acute to acuminate at tip, with prophyll ≤ 1 mm longer than bract, rounded to 2-toothed at tip, encircling branch base, 2-veined; bractlet (bracteole) subtending pedicel narrowly ovate to awl-shaped, 3.3–4 mm long, acuminate to awned at tip, membranous except for midvein and awn; pedicel 0.5–0.8 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, closed, lanceoloid, ca. 4 × 1.5 mm; **tepals** 6 in 2 similar whorls, erect, acuminate-lanceolate, at anthesis 3.7–4 mm long, sometimes outer tepals slightly longer than inner tepals, green with whitish margins becoming purplish red, 1-veined, persistent; **stamens** 6, free, opposite tepals, included; filaments 0.7–1 mm long; anthers basifixed, dithecal, linear, 1.5–2.8 × 0.2 mm, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, 6–7 mm long; ovary superior, lanceoloid, 2 mm long, greenish, acuminoid below style, 1-chambered with 40–50 ovules; style 3-branched, lower portion 1–2 mm long, the stigmatic branches exerted, curly to corkscrewlike, 2–3 mm long, purplish pink. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, dehiscent by 3 valves, many-seeded, oblong, < perianth or with acuminoid tip slightly exerted, dark tan to brownish, ± 3-sided in ×-section, valves indented at septum and slightly ribbed on sutures, with persistent style base. **Seed:** obovoid, 0.5–0.6 mm long, not tailed. Mid-summer.

Native. Clonal perennial herb found in several depressions where water collects during the rainy season, typically forming dense, monospecific stands. *Juncus phaeocephalus* resembles the more common *J. xiphioides* in having the shoot flattened so that the blade edge is toward the stem, as in *Iris* or *Sisyrinchium bellum* (Iridaceae). There are unsolved issues with the circumscription and scientific name of panicled rush.

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