## BIOL 301 – PLANT TAXONOMY

## OVERVIEW OF GRASSES, SEDGES AND RUSHES

**Poaceae** (650-785 / 10,000)

* mostly dry to mesic habitats, though some in wet
* leaf blades flat, sometimes keeled
* stem round or elliptical in cross-section
* leaves with open sheath and ligule at junction of blade and sheath
* internodes hollow, nodes jointed
* inflorescence of very compact spikelets, spikelets aggregated into compound inflorescences
* stem does not extend beyond inflorescence
* flowers very reduced, perianth of 2-3 minute scales, each flower subtended by 2 bracts
* fruit a caryopsis = grain (seed and pericarp are fused)

**Cyperaceae** (146 / 5-9000)

* mostly in wet sites
* leaf blades flat, often keeled
* stems triangular in cross-section (sedges have edges)
* leaves with a closed sheath
* internodes usually solid, nodes unjointed
* inflorescence of very compact spikelets, spikelets aggregated into compound inflorescences (spikes, racemes, panicles, umbels, etc)
* stem or bract sometimes extends beyond inflorescence
* flowers very reduced, perianth of bristles (or absent), each flower subtended by a bractlet
* fruit an achene

## Juncaceae (8 / 300)

* smallest family
* mostly in wet sites
* often with terete leaves, or leaves absent
* stems terete in cross-section (rushes are round)
* *Juncus* has leaves with an open sheath, *Luzula* has leaves with a closed sheath
* internodes solid, nodes unjointed
* inflorescences paniculate or cymose, sometimes congested but not spike-like
* stem or bract sometimes extends beyond the inflorescence
* flowers reduced, 6 tepals
* fruit a capsule