

# Leafy Twig-rush

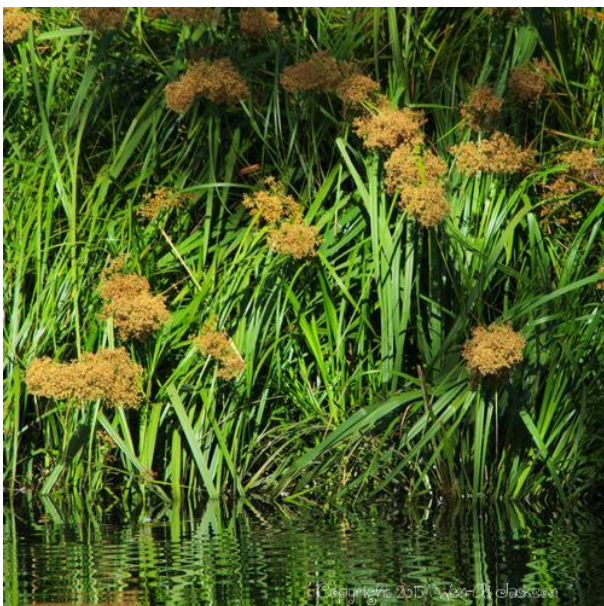
## *Cladium procerum*

**NAMING:** *Clados* – Greek meaning branchlet referring to the plant's panicles. *Procerus* - Latin meaning tall or long, referencing the plant's height. Other common names include “tall sawgrass” and “tall saw-sedge”.

**DISTRIBUTION:** *Cladium procerum*, commonly known as the Leafy Twig-rush is a type of sedge native to Australia found in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory. In South Australia, it is considered rare, particularly in the southern Mount Lofty Ranges and the lower South-East.

**HABITAT:** It is commonly found in wetlands, including swamps, marshes, and along riverbanks. Preferring areas with standing water or very moist soil, it will tolerate moderate saline levels.

**DESCRIPTION:** It is a large spreading perennial reaching up to 2 to 3 metres high. It has a vigorous rhizome root system and grows into large clumps. *Cladium procerum* grows in full sun and semi-shade and copes with mild frost. It is rare in South Australia, but not at this Wetland.



The narrow, **sword shaped leaves** are up to 2.5m long and 5 to 20mm wide. They are usually green with a yellow-brown sheath at the base and have sharp, small saw-toothed edges.

The actual **flowers** are inconspicuous and covered by two bracts and are arranged in dense, red-brown clusters. Groups of these clusters form an oblong inflorescence (flower head) 18–35 cm long and 6–9 cm in diameter. They are **not** particularly showy compared to the foliage. Flower heads are produced from late spring to early summer. Once fertilized, these flowers produce small oval seeds, 2.0 to 2.5 mm long, 1.3 to 2 mm wide. These seeds are smooth, shining and mid-brown and attached to small basal disks that often remain in the clusters on the flower stalk, after the seeds have dropped off.



### **TRADITIONAL USE:**

Indigenous Australians have used the leaves for making various items such as baskets, mats, and roofing materials. The plant's fibres were made into durable ropes that were used in various tasks, including the construction of traps and tools. The fibres were also twisted and woven into intricate patterns. The plant's leaves were historically used in constructing traditional shelters and huts, providing thatching, insulation and protection from the elements.