



**Common Name:** Juncus (Basket Rush)

**Scientific Name:** Juncus textilis

**Kumeyaay Name:** kwa' naay (kw' ni)

**Description:** This is a reed-like grass that grows at the edges of ponds and streams. The leaves are very stiff, sharp, and pointy. It has tiny brown flowers on it in the spring and summer.

**Uses by the Kumeyaay:** The Kumeyaay would spit the stems and dry them. Then they used them to wrap coils of basket grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) and tie them together to make baskets.

You can read about this plant in *Indians of the Oaks* on pages 46-47. Op-a-chuck, Kwee-tahk, and their friends were walking along the banks of the river looking for tall reeds to use to make baskets. As they neared a dry creek where grass and reeds grew the thickest Op-a-chuck said, "Here is the best place. The kw'ni is tall and thick." The book then explains that kw'ni was used as the "basket wrapper, the reed which is wrapped around the inside filler." The women all began pulling the reeds out of the creek bottom. The lower end of each reed is a golden brown color. This is the part of the reed that they used to make the designs as they wove their baskets.

By Luis