



Carex bella. (A) Inflorescences, (B) pistillate scales, (C) perigynia, (D) achenes. B through D: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

Carex bella Bailey
Beautiful sedge, showy sedge

HABIT: Cespitose from short-creeping, fibrillose rhizomes. **Culms:** Slender, cinnamon brown and more or less reddish-tinged at the base, 5-9 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **phyllopodic**, dried leaves of the previous year evident.

LEAVES: 8-12 on the lower one-half of the culm. **Blades:** Erect, flat, 3-6 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Dull reddish-brown-tinged or dotted ventrally, concave at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest leaflike, sheathing, 2.5 cm long, equaling or exceeding the inflorescence; upper reduced.

SPIKES: 3-4, linear to oblong-linear, bicolored with green and reddish brown, 12-25 mm long, 4-5.5 mm wide, approximate, but not crowded. **Terminal:** Short-pedunculate, mostly **gynaecandrous**, sometimes the lower half staminate. **Lateral:** **Gynaecandrous** with few staminate flowers, closely flowered; the upper contiguous, short-pedunculate; the lower strongly separate, drooping on slender, somewhat rough peduncles 1.5-4 cm long; perigynia appressed.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate with obtuse to acute tip, shorter than the perigynia, dark brown or generally reddish brown with pale midrib and shining white-hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Broadly oval to oblong-oval or obovoid, rounded to rather pointed at the base, rounded at the apex, somewhat compressed or flattened, distended by the mature achene, membranous, smooth, puncticulate (at high magnification), greenish, rarely purplish-tinged, 2.5-4 mm long, 1.7-2 mm wide. **Nerves:** 2-3, obscure or lacking on each face; marginal nerves present. **Beaks:** Abrupt, purplish to brownish, shallowly bidentate, 0.2-0.5 mm long.

ACHENES: Ovoid or oblong-ovoid, trigonous, granular, substipitate, yellowish brown, 1.8-2.4 mm long, 1.75 mm wide, nearly filling the perigynia. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Occasional to frequent in moist woods, meadows, open slopes, and streambanks at **high elevations** in the mountains. Utah and northern Colorado to Arizona and New Mexico. **June-August.**