



Carex echinata. (A) Pistillate scales, (B) perigynia, (C) achenes, (D) inflorescences. A through C: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

***Carex echinata* Murray**
Spiny star sedge

SYNONYM: *C. muricata* L.

HABIT: Densely tufted. **Culms:** 1-6 dm tall, equaling to exceeding the leaves, somewhat **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: All borne on the lower part of culm. **Blades:** Elongate, slender, light green, 1-3.3 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Thin, hyaline ventrally, slightly thickened, and shallowly concave at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest small and inconspicuous to setaceous-prolonged, sheathless; upper reduced and scale-like.

SPIKES: 3-6, green, turning to brown, clustered to remote, forming an elongated to oblong head. **Terminal: Gynaecandrous. Lateral: Gynaecandrous** or wholly **pistillate**; perigynia 5-15, crowded, widely spreading to deflexed at maturity.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Broadly ovate, acute or cuspidate at the tip, shorter and narrower than the perigynia, hyaline or scarious, brownish tinged, greenish along the firm midvein.

PERIGYNIA: Lance-triangular to lance-ovate, plano-convex, thin-walled or subcoriaceous with abundant spongy tissue at the base, sharp edged, serrulate distally, green or tan, 1.6-3.5(4.0) mm long, 0.8-2 mm wide. **Nerves:** Few to many dorsally, few or absent ventrally, prominent on the margins. **Beaks:** Slender, abruptly tapered, greener than the body, bidentate, 1.1-1.6 mm long.

ACHENE: Ovate, lenticular, substipitate, golden yellow at maturity, 1.1-1.6 mm long, 0.8-1.3 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Swamps, sphagnum bogs, and other wet places from **sea level to moderate elevations**. Circumboreal. In North America extending south to central Oregon and California and east to Utah, Colorado, Wisconsin, and North Carolina. **May-August**.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *C. echinata*—Perigynium beak slender; longer (1.1-1.6 mm long), equaling the body, thin-walled, bidentate; style slender. *C. interior*—Perigynium beak broader and shorter (0.5-1 mm long), thick-walled, very shallowly bidentate; style stout.