



Carex eleocharis. (A) Pistillate scales, (B) perigynia, (C) inflorescences. A and B: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

Carex eleocharis Bailey
Narrowleaf sedge, needleleaf sedge

SYNONYM: *Carex stenophylla* Wahl.

HABIT: Culms arising singly or few together from slender, well-developed brown rhizomes. **Culms:** Slender, smooth, obtusely angled, erect, 0.5-2 dm tall, slightly **phyllopodic**, old leaf bases present.

LEAVES: 1-4, closely clustered at or near the base of the culm. **Blades:** Slender, canaliculate and firm or flat and sometimes involute, 0.3-1.5 mm wide, tapering to a long tip. **Sheaths:** Hyaline ventrally, overlapping, shallowly concave at the mouth.

BRACTS: Short and inconspicuous, ovate, cuspidate, resembling the pistillate scales.

SPIKES: Several indistinguishable, **androgynous** or rarely **unisexual**, small, sessile, aggregated into an ovoid or oblong-cylindric, brown to reddish brown head 8-17 mm long; perigynia few, appressed-ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Broadly ovate with a firm and often shortly exerted midrib, equaling or surpassing the perigynia and concealing them, stramineous to brownish.

PERIGYNIA: Broadly elliptic-ovate, plano-convex, coriaceous, shining, often broadly short-stipitate, greenish brown to brownish black at maturity, 2.5-3.5 mm long, 1.5-2 mm wide. **Nerves:** Dorsally absent or about 10, obscurely striated; ventrally absent or several; marginal nerves prominent. **Beaks:** Abruptly contracted into a smooth or serrulate obliquely cleft beak, sometimes bidentate and hyaline tipped, 0.5-1.0 mm long.

ACHENES: Orbicular-ovate, lenticular, apiculate, jointed at the short style, 1.5-2.1 mm long, 1.25-1.7 mm wide, closely filling the perigynium. **Stigmas:** 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Common and locally abundant on open, dry to moderately wet, often grassy places, from the **plains to fairly high elevations** in the mountains. Oregon and Idaho south to California (where rare) and east to Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and through the Rocky Mountains to Iowa and Nebraska. **May-August.**