



Carex filifolia. (A) Inflorescences, (B) pistillate scales, (C) perigynia, (D) achenes (achene on right with rachilla). B through D: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

Carex filifolia Nutt.
Sheepswool sedge, thread-leaved sedge

HABIT: Densely tufted without creeping rhizomes, forming a dense sod, sometimes giving the appearance that all clumps are connected. **Culms:** Slender, wiry, terete, 0.5-3 dm tall, equaling or exceeding the leaves, **phyllopodic**, old leaf bases persistent.

LEAVES: 2-3. **Blades:** Acicular, involute, slender, stiff, wiry, 0.2-0.4 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Thin and hyaline ventrally, truncate at the mouth; basal sheaths persistent, striate, filamentose.

BRACTS: None.

SPIKES: Solitary, **androgynous**, erect, narrowly conic with a tapered base, tan to brown, 1-3 cm long, 3-6 mm wide; **staminate** portion terminal, slenderly conic; lower portion with 5-15 erect-ascending perigynia.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Broadly obovate, broadly rounded or erose distally (the lowest ones more pointed), equaling or larger than and entirely concealing the perigynia, brown with wide white-hyaline margins, occasionally with a pale midvein or sometimes obscurely 3-veined.

PERIGYNIA: Obovoid or spherical-obovoid to obpyramidal, dull-whitish or straw-colored, often darker just below the beak, 3-4.5 mm long, 2-2.3 mm wide, copiously, but very minutely hirtellous-puberulent, at least above the middle. **Nerves:** Obscurely 2-ribbed, otherwise nerveless or nearly so. **Beaks:** Stout, abruptly contracted, hyaline-tipped, truncately cut, 0.1-0.8 mm long.

ACHENES: Obovoid, apiculate, trigonous, tapering at the base, 2.2-3 mm long; rachilla well-developed. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Dry, open slopes or plains, often with sagebrush or in grassy prairies, from **plains and valleys to moderate elevations** in the mountains. Yukon to Oregon (Harney and Malheur Counties) and California and east through central Idaho, Nevada (Elko County), Utah (Daggett and Emery Counties), New Mexico, Nebraska, and Texas. **June-August.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 7.