



0 5mm



0 1mm

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

Carex nigricans C. A. Meyer
Black alpine sedge

HABIT: Sometimes loosely cespitose from long, stout, creeping rhizomes. **Culms:** Stiff, obtusely angled to semi-terete, 0.4-3 dm tall, **phyllopodic**, dried leaves present at the base.

LEAVES: 4-9, crowded near the base. **Blades:** Stiff, flat or channeled, 4-13 cm long, 1.5-3 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Thin, hyaline, truncate at the mouth.

BRACTS: None.

SPIKES: Solitary, **androgynous**, rarely wholly **staminate** or wholly **pistillate**, oblong or oblong-ovoid, dark brown to black, 7-20 mm long, 6-10 mm thick; perigynia 20-50, dense, appressed-ascending, becoming widely spreading and deciduous at maturity.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Broadly ovate with obtuse to acute tips, equaling or shorter than the perigynia, black, thin-margined, sometimes with a pale midrib, soon becoming spreading and deciduous as the fruit approaches maturity, each scale leaving a conspicuous ridge on the spike axis. **Staminate scales:** persistent, appressed.

PERIGYNIA: Lanceolate to narrowly ovate, smooth and shining, slender-stipitate, dark brown or black distally, paler and more stramineous or greenish toward the base, 3-4.5 mm long, 0.8-1.5 mm wide. **Nerves:** Absent to conspicuously nerved or with marginal nerves only. **Beaks:** Tapering, terete, narrow, smooth, obliquely cleft, 0.5 mm long.

ACHENES: Oblong-elliptic, somewhat unequally trigonous, 1.1-2 mm long, 0.6-0.9 mm wide, jointed to the style; rachilla obsolete. **Stigmas:** 3 or sometimes 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Common in meadows, along streambanks, and in other moist or wet places at **high elevations** in the mountains. Alaska to California, eastern Oregon, Utah (Uinta and Wasatch Mountains), and Colorado. Not yet recorded from Nevada. **June-August.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 4.