



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

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*Carex occidentalis* Bailey  
Western sedge

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**HABIT:** Densely clustered from short, stout, creeping black, fibrillose rhizomes. **Culms:** Slender, semi-terete to sharply triangular, smooth below, roughened above, 1.5-8 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **aphyllopodic**.

**LEAVES:** Several. **Blades:** Flat with slightly revolute margins, 1-2.5 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Tight, thin, brownish, truncate to shallowly concave at the mouth.

**BRACTS:** Setaceous to poorly developed or none.

**SPIKES:** 4-10, **androgynous**, stramineous to brown or reddish-tinged, forming an oblong to linear-oblong head 1.5-3.5 cm long; the upper spikes aggregated and indistinguishable; the lower somewhat separate; **staminate** flowers inconspicuous; perigynia loosely ascending or spreading.

**PISTILLATE SCALES:** Ovate-triangular with an acuminate or short-awned tip, equal in length but wider than the perigynia, brownish with opaque or narrow hyaline margins and green center.

**PERIGYNIA:** Oblong-elliptic, plano-convex, sparingly serrulate above the middle, stipitate, green to straw-colored, smooth and shiny, brown at maturity, 2.5-4.5 mm long, 1.5-1.9 mm wide; margins sharp, narrow, green, smooth, shiny. **Nerves:** Inconspicuous or absent, marginal only. **Beaks:** Abruptly narrowed, serrulate, flat, shallowly to deeply bidentate, 0.2-1.2 mm long.

**ACHENES:** Oblong-orbicular, lenticular, light brown at maturity, 1.3-2.4 mm long, 0.9-1.5 mm wide. Stigmas: 2.

**HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION:** Occasional to frequent in dry habitats, generally at **mid elevations**, but extending upward to **subalpine or alpine areas**. Southern California to Nevada, Utah, Arizona, southern Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. **July-August**.