



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

Carex arcta Boott

Bear sedge, clustered sedge, northern clustered sedge

HABIT: Plants densely tufted from very short rhizomes. **Culms:** Sharply triangular, 1-8 dm tall, shorter than the leaves, slightly **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: Clustered toward the base. **Blades:** Flat, light green, 1.5-4 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Thin and hyaline ventrally, brownish-tinged at the truncate mouth; lower sheaths at least sparsely red-dotted ventrally.

BRACTS: Lowest sheathless, setaceous-prolonged to 5 cm; upper short and inconspicuous.

SPIKES: 4-15, **gynaecandrous**, sessile, 5-10 mm long, crowded in a dense, pale green to greenish brown, oblong to elongate head 1.5-4 cm long; upper spikes crowded; lower spikes well-differentiated; **staminate** flowers inconspicuous; perigynia spreading-ascending to widely spreading at maturity.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate with an acute tip, shorter than the perigynia, largely hyaline-scarious, brownish to nearly colorless with a firm, light brownish green midvein.

PERIGYNIA: Ovate or lance-ovate, rounded and somewhat spongy at the stipitate base, plano-convex, thin-edged, not winged, distally serrulate from above the middle, greenish-stramineous with greener margins, becoming greenish brown at maturity, 2-3.4 mm long, 1-1.2 mm wide.

Nerves: Several dorsally, few or none ventrally. **Beaks:** Tapered, flat, serrulate, bidentate, 0.6-1.2 mm long.

ACHENES: Obovate to ovate, lenticular, slightly tapered to a substipitate base, stramineous to brownish, 1.2-1.6 mm long, 0.8-1.1 mm wide.

Stigmas: 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Occasional. Streambanks, wet meadows, swampy woods, thickets, and other wet places. **Lowlands to near timberline.** Southern Yukon to Quebec, south to Washington, Oregon, northern California (coast ranges), northern and central Idaho, and northwestern Montana and east to Minnesota and New York. **June-August.**