



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

Carex athrostachya Olney
Slenderbeaked sedge

HABIT: Densely tufted without creeping rhizomes. **Culms:** Slender, 0.5-10 dm tall, equaling or exceeding the leaves, **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: 2-5, usually clustered on the lower one-third of the culm.

Blades: Flat, firm, yellowish green to bright green, 1.5-4 mm wide.

Sheaths: Hyaline ventrally, truncate to slightly concave at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest usually equaling or surpassing the inflorescence, spreading or ascending, setaceous-prolonged, 4-10 cm long; upper reduced and scalelike.

SPIKES: 4-20, **gynaecandrous**, sessile, 6-10 mm long, closely crowded in a green, stamineous, or medium brown ovoid or globose-ovoid head 1-2.5 cm long and 7-20 mm wide; perigynia appressed-ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Oblong-ovate with an acute or short-cuspidate tip, slightly shorter than the perigynia, brown to reddish brown with a green or pale center and white-hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Lanceolate or narrowly ovate, flattened or somewhat plano-convex, tapered to the base, **wing**-margined and serrulate distally, membranous, 2.8-4.8 mm long, 0.9-1.8 mm wide. **Nerves:** Several, faint, but often darker brown toward the base dorsally; few or lacking ventrally.

Beaks: Subterete, narrowly margined or marginless, usually entire or obliquely cleft and shallowly bidentate in the distal 0.5-0.8 mm.

ACHENES: Oblong-oval, lenticular, 0.8-1.2 mm long, 0.7-1.1 mm wide.

Stigmas: 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Common to locally abundant in moist or wet places, often colonizing below the high water line of reservoirs and in ephemeral pools. **Lowlands to moderate elevations** in the mountains. South from Alaska to California and east from Arizona to North Dakota. Found in appropriate habitats throughout the Intermountain Region. **May-July.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 1.