



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

Carex canescens L.
Gray sedge, pale sedge, silvery sedge

HABIT: Loosely to densely clustered on short rhizomes. **Culms:** Often lax and widely spreading, sharply triangular, equaling or exceeding the leaves, 1-8 dm tall, slightly **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: Clustered near the base. **Blades:** Flat, soft, glaucous-green, 1.5-4 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Tight, thin and hyaline ventrally, concave at the mouth.

BRACTS: Sheathless, scarious, inconspicuous; lowest sometimes setaceous-tipped, shorter to longer than the inflorescence; upper reduced.

SPIKES: 4-8, **gynaecandrous**, sessile, silvery green, light green, pale gray or pale stramineous, 5-10 mm long, approximate to remote, aggregated into an elongated head 2-5 cm long; perigynia 10-30 per spike, appressed-ascending to spreading-ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Broadly to narrowly ovate, shorter and narrower than the perigynia, white-hyaline with a greenish midvein.

PERIGYNIA: Ovoid-oblong, spongy-thickened below, short stipitate, plano-convex, margins raised and smooth throughout or minutely serrulate and rough-papillate distally, light green to dull silver or stramineous, brownish golden yellow to dull brown, 1.8-3 mm long, 0.9-1.75 mm wide. **Nerves:** Fine or prominently dark-lined on both surfaces, fewer ventrally than dorsally. **Beaks:** Short, 0.2-0.5 mm long, gradually tapered, shallowly and obliquely cleft, dorsal suture short and inconspicuous or obsolete.

ACHENES: Oblong-obovate, lenticular, contracted at the base, substipitate, 1.2-1.5 mm long, 0.8-1 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Wet meadows, bogs, swamps, and lake margins from **lowlands to higher elevations**. Circumboreal. In North America from Alaska to Newfoundland and south to California, Nevada (Elko County), Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Jersey, and Virginia. **June-August.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 5.