



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

***Carex fracta* Mack.**
Fragile-sheathed sedge

HABIT: Loosely to densely cespitose from very short rhizomes. **Culms:** Coarse, erect, 4-10 dm tall, greatly exceeding the leaves, **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: All borne on the lower one-half of the culm, but not clustered.

Blades: Flat, elongate, 3-7 mm wide. **Sheaths:** White-hyaline ventrally or green-ribbed to within 10 mm of the mouth; a prominent tongue-like extension 2-4 mm long above the mouth surpasses the base of the blade.

BRACTS: Lowest usually setaceous-prolonged, shorter than or sometimes equaling or slightly exceeding the inflorescence; upper reduced and inconspicuous.

SPIKES: 7-35, **gynaecandrous**, sessile, 1 cm long, crowded into a green to pale gold, oblong-ovoid to spiciform-cylindric inflorescence 3-8 cm long; head often compound; perigynia appressed-ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate-lanceolate, acuminate or shortly awn-tipped, equaling or shorter and narrower than the perigynia, green along the midstripe with wide, white-hyaline-scarious margins.

PERIGYNIA: Ovate to lance-ovate, plano-convex or flattened, slightly to prominently **wing**-margined, serrulate on the upper half, 2.5-4.5(5.2) mm long, 1.0-1.8 mm wide, green, especially on the upper margins, or greenish-stramineous. **Nerves:** Several on both surfaces. **Beak:** Prominent, slender, narrowly tapered, obliquely cleft, serrulate, but smooth in the distal 0.5 mm.

ACHENES: Apiculate, lenticular, substipitate, stramineous to brown, 1.2-2 mm long, 0.8-1.2 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Common in wet or dry meadows and moist slopes in open forests. **Foothills to near timberline** in the mountains. Washington to California in the coast ranges and Cascade-Sierra axis to the mountains of southern California. **July-August**.