



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

***Carex helleri* Mack.**
Heller sedge

HABIT: Densely caespitose from short rhizomes. **Culms:** 0.5-5 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **phyllopodic**.

LEAVES: Borne on the lower one-half of the culm but not clustered.

Blades: Flat, 1.5-3.5 mm wide, 15 cm long. **Sheaths:** Thin, hyaline ventrally, concave at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest leaflike, sheathless or nearly so, shorter than the inflorescence; upper reduced.

SPIKES: 3-5, oblong, sessile, 1-2 cm long, closely aggregated, forming a dense reddish brown to dark brown head, individual spikes have rough outline due to the short awn-tipped pistillate scales. **Terminal: Gynaecandrous**, clavate. **Lateral: Pistillate**; perigynia crowded, ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Lanceolate-ovate, acuminate, attenuate, or short-awn-tipped, narrower and longer than the perigynia, purplish black with a paler midrib and sometimes with obscurely white-hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Oval to obovate or roundish, flattened (except where distended by the achene), thin with a darker center and pale or greenish margins, membranaceous throughout, 2.5-3.8 mm long, 1.5-2.8 mm wide.

Nerves: Lacking or faint on both surfaces; marginal nerves present.

Beaks: Very short, 0.2-0.5 mm long, shallowly bidentate.

ACHENES: Short-oblong, trigonous, and sharply angled, pale brown, 1.2-1.8 mm long, 0.7-1 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Open, often dry or rocky places at **high elevations**. Cascade and Sweetwater Mountains of California, and the Sierra Nevada and White Mountains along the California-Nevada border. To be expected in other Nevada ranges. **July-August**.

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 2.