



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

---

*Carex leptalea* Wahl.  
Bristlestalked sedge, flaccid sedge

---

**HABIT:** Stems usually densely clustered from slender, freely branching rhizomes. **Culms:** Triangular, slender, sometimes arching, 1.5-7 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **aphyllopodic**.

**LEAVES:** 2. **Blades:** Flat or canaliculate, thin, soft and lax, deep green, 0.5-1.3 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Membranous, brownish-tinged at maturity, concave at the mouth.

**BRACTS:** None.

**SPIKES:** Solitary, **androgynous**, erect, linear-oblong, green to yellowish green, 4-16 mm long, 2-3 mm thick; staminate portion often short and slender, 0.5-0.8 mm wide, sometimes inconspicuous; perigynia few, subalternate on the rachis, appressed-ascending.

**PISTILLATE SCALES:** Ovate-orbicular, small, shorter than the perigynia, green to brown, deciduous; the lowest sometimes elongate and resembling a setaceous bract; the upper obtuse to short-awned, early deciduous.

**PERIGYNIA:** Oval-elliptic, circular in cross section and somewhat two-edged, spongy at the base, slightly tapered to a rounded, entire or emarginate apex, often substipitate, pale green or yellowish green to stramineous throughout, membranaceous, 2.5-5 mm long, 1-1.5 mm wide. **Nerves:** Finely many-striate on both surfaces; marginal nerves present. **Beaks:** Lacking.

**ACHENES:** Oblong-ovoid, triquetrous, glossy, yellow to brown, nearly filling the perigynium, 1.3-2 mm long, 0.8-1 mm wide, the style deciduous; rachilla absent. **Stigmas:** 3.

**HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION:** Occasional in sphagnum bogs and swamps, often along small streams, lake shores, and on low, wet ground. **Lower to higher elevations.** Alaska to Labrador and south to northern California, Idaho, northeastern Utah, Colorado, Texas, and Florida. **May-August.**