



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

Carex aenea Fern.
Bronze sedge, Fremont sedge

HABIT: Densely tufted from a short, fibrillose root system. **Culms:** Slender, smooth, wiry, flexuous at the tip, 2-12 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: 3-6, borne on the lower half of the culm. **Blades:** Flat, soft, 2-4 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Tight, green- and white-mottled dorsally, thin and hyaline ventrally, shallowly concave to truncate at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest sheathless, somewhat setaceous-prolonged, shorter than the inflorescence; upper often inconspicuous.

SPIKES: 4-10(18), **gynaecandrous**, sessile, mostly clavate-based and separate or the upper 2-3 approximate, forming a flexuous, moniliform pale green to stramineous or medium brown inflorescence 1.5-8 cm long; perigynia ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate to broadly lanceolate with an acute tip, nearly as large as the perigynia and concealing them, largely hyaline-scarious except for the firmer midrib, stramineous to medium brown with narrow, hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Ovate, concavo-convex or plano-convex, **wing**-margined, serrulate above the middle, dull green or pale greenish, becoming brownish or stramineous, 3.5-5 mm long, (1.5)1.7-2.5 mm wide. **Nerves:** 4-9 dorsally, often longitudinally more or less wrinkled or ribbed-sulcate; 0 to 8 and weak ventrally. **Beaks:** Tapered, flat, serrulate, one-half the length of the body, obliquely cleft, bidentate.

ACHENES: Broadly oval, lenticular, dull yellowish brown or medium brown, 1.5-2 mm long, 1-1.7 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Infrequent or local in moist or wet places. **Valleys and plains to moderate elevations** in the mountains. Yukon to Labrador, south to British Columbia, Idaho (rare), Montana, and east to Connecticut. **May-July**.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *C. aenea*—Inflorescence moniliform; individual spikes separate, clavate, ovoid, greenish; pistillate scales stramineous or brown; perigynium with a broad, rounded base. *C. praticola*—Inflorescence generally flexuous; individual spikes approximate, oblong, brownish; pistillate scales brown; perigynium with a tapered base.