



Carex geophila. (A) Inflorescences, (B) pistillate scales, (C) perigynia, (D) achene. B and C: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

Carex geophila Mack.
Ground-loving sedge

HABIT: Densely cespitose, developing from branched rhizomes. **Culms:** Slender, rough on the angles, 2-10 cm tall, shorter than to equaling the leaves, **phyllopodic**, old fibrillose sheaths persistent at the base.

LEAVES: 5-10, clustered toward the base. **Blades:** Firm, roughened, channeled above, 1-2.5 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Slightly ribbed and hyaline ventrally, truncate at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest sheathless or short-sheathing, shorter than to slightly surpassing the inflorescence; upper reduced and scalelike or lacking.

SPIKES: 2-5, slender, tan to brown. **Terminal: Staminate**, linear, usually pedunculate, 5-12 mm long. **Lateral: 2-4, pistillate**, sessile or short-pedunculate, few-flowered, usually borne near the staminate, but sometimes with 1 or more small pistillate spikes near the base of the culm; perigynia spreading-ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate with an acute to cuspidate tip, equaling or shorter than the perigynia, reddish brown with a greenish or paler center and hyaline margins; lower ones longer.

PERIGYNIA: Subglobose to ellipsoid or obovoid, tapering to a narrow substipitate base and abruptly contracted at the apex, puberulent, pale green to stramineous, occasionally with some reddish-purple streaks, 2.7-4 mm long, 1.75 mm wide. **Nerves:** Two-keeled (nerves marginal), otherwise nerveless or lightly nerved at the base. **Beaks:** Conic, short, serrulate, shallowly bidentate, 0.4-1.2 mm long.

ACHENES: Trigonous with convex sides and prominent angles, rounded and apiculate to retuse at the apex, stipitate, 1.6-2.8 mm long, 1.75 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Dry, open places in the pinyon-juniper zone or on wooded slopes. **Moderate elevations.** Southern Utah and southwestern Colorado to Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico. **May-July.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 6.