



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

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***Carex microptera* Mack.**  
**Small-winged sedge**

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**HABIT:** Densely tufted without creeping rhizomes. **Culms:** Sharply triangular above, conspicuously striate, 2-10 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, slightly **aphyllopodic**.

**LEAVES:** 3-5, borne on the lower one-third of the culm. **Blades:** Flat, firm, 2-4.5 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Tight, white-hyaline ventrally, truncate at the mouth.

**BRACT:** Sheathless, setaceous above an expanded, scarious-margined base, short-awned, shorter to slightly longer than the inflorescence or reduced and not much different from the pistillate scales.

**SPIKES:** 5-10, **gynaecandrous**, sessile, green to greenish black, becoming brown at maturity, not over 1 cm long, indistinguishable and densely aggregated into an ovoid or suborbicular, truncate-based head, 12-20 mm long and 10-16 mm wide; perigynia spreading-ascending at maturity.

**PISTILLATE SCALES:** Ovate-lanceolate with an acute tip, narrower and shorter than the perigynia, scarious or hyaline-scarious, light to dark brown or greenish black with a faint midrib.

**PERIGYNIA:** Broadly ovate-lanceolate to lanceolate, thin and flattened except where distended by the achene (occasionally air trapped within the perigynium makes it appear plano-convex), serrulate to the middle and narrowly to broadly wing-margined to the round-tapering base, varying from green to stramineous, often tan, or brown to blackish medially and along the edges, 2.9-5 mm long, 1.1-2.4 mm wide. **Nerves:** Several, light or obscure on each side. **Beaks:** Ill-defined, gradually tapered, one-half to one-third the length of the body, serrulate except the distal 0.3 to 0.6 mm that is subterete, dark-tipped, obliquely cleft, obscurely bidentate or entire.

**ACHENES:** Broadly ovoid to obovoid, lenticular, brown at maturity, 1-1.6 mm long, 0.7-1.4 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 2.

**HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION:** Common species of moist or wet places, from **foothills to moderately high elevations** in the mountains. British Columbia and Saskatchewan south to California, Arizona, and South Dakota. **May-August.**

**SIMILAR SPECIES:** See appendix, table 1.