



*Carex saxatilis*. (A) Pistillate scales, (B) perigynia, (C) achenes, (D) inflorescences. A through C: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

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*Carex saxatilis* L.  
Rock sedge, russet sedge

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**HABIT:** Culms arise singly or in small clusters from well-developed, creeping rhizomes; turf-forming. **Culms:** Slender, erect, sharply triangular, reddish-tinged at the base, 2-8 dm tall, **phyllopodic**, leaves of previous year present.

**LEAVES:** 3-7, clustered on the lower one-third of the culm. **Blades:** Ascending, flat with revolute margins, glabrous, often septate-nodulose, very rough toward the apex, 1.5-5 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Tight, truncate to concave at the mouth, basal sheaths cross-filamentose when mature.

**BRACTS:** Leaflike, barely sheathing, 3-15 cm long, shorter or longer than the inflorescence.

**SPIKES:** 3-5, often glossy and purplish black. **Terminal: Staminate**, linear, peduncled, dark brown, 1-5 cm long, 2.5 mm thick, sometimes with an additional sessile staminate spike. **Lateral:** 1-3, **pistillate**, spreading or drooping, sessile to pedunculate, oblong to oblong-cylindric, densely flowered, 1-3.5 cm long, 5-12 mm thick, often widely separate; perigynia ascending.

**PISTILLATE SCALES:** Ovate or ovate-lanceolate with an obtuse to acuminate and often erose apex, shorter and narrower than the perigynia, dark reddish black with a lighter midrib and hyaline margins.

**PERIGYNIA:** Ovoid-lanceolate or elliptic-ovate, biconvex, rounded at the substipitate base, abruptly contracted at the apex, membranous, punctulate, dull greenish yellow with the upper half reddish black-tinged at maturity, 3-5 mm long, 2 mm wide. **Nerves:** Few, obscure, or none dorsally, absent ventrally, evident on the margins. **Beaks:** Slender, dark-tinged at the tip, obliquely cleft and scarcely bidentate, 0.5 mm long.

**ACHENES:** Broadly ovoid or obovoid, lenticular or sometimes trigonous, sessile, punctulate, yellowish, 1.7-2 mm long, 1.5-1.7 mm wide, tapering into and continuous with the persistent, bony style that becomes contorted at maturity. **Stigmas:** 2 or sometimes 3.

**HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION:** Infrequent to common in wet meadows, bogs, and on stream and pond margins from **middle altitudes to timberline**. Circumboreal. In North America south to Washington and east to Nevada, central Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Hudson Bay, and Labrador. **June-August.**

**DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS:** *C. saxatilis* is the only species in the Intermountain Region with a persistent, contorted, bony style and two stigmas.