



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

Carex stipata Muhl.

Awl-fruit sedge, prickly sedge, saw-beak sedge

HABIT: Densely clumped from short, stout rhizomes. **Culms:** Stout, 4-6 mm thick, sharply concave-triangular with the angles narrow-winged and serrulate above, 3.5-10 dm tall, equaling the leaves, slightly **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: Blades: Flat, coarse, flaccid, yellowish green, 4-11 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Septate-nodulose dorsally; thin, fragile, and cross-rugulose ventrally; convex at the mouth.

BRACTS: Sheathless, short and inconspicuous or sometimes setaceous and surpassing the inflorescence.

SPIKES: Numerous, **androgynous**, small, sessile, yellowish brown to dark brown at maturity, lower distinguishable, upper indistinguishable, aggregated into a compound oblong-linear to ovoid head 3-10 cm long, 1-3 cm thick; perigynia spreading; beaks prominent, giving the spikes a prickly appearance; perigynia and scales deciduous.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate-triangular with an acuminate or cuspidate tip, shorter than the perigynia, brownish to greenish along the midrib with hyaline or brownish margins.

PERIGYNIA: Lance-triangular to narrowly ovate, plano-convex or bi-convex, conspicuously spongy-thickened at the base, sharp-edged to the base, serrulate-margined (not winged) distally, stipitate, greenish-stramineous becoming yellowish brown to dark brown at maturity, 3.6-6 mm long, 1.5-1.8 mm wide. **Nerves:** Sometimes darker than the body, prominent on both surfaces. **Beaks:** Tapered with long, thin, ill-defined, serrulate margins, about the length of the body, obliquely cleft and slightly bidentate.

ACHENES: Broadly ovate to ovate-orbicular, lenticular, substipitate, golden brown at maturity, 1.3-2.3 mm long, 1.3-1.8 mm wide, jointed at the style. **Stigmas:** 2.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Occasional in swamps, wet meadows, and along ditches at **low and mid elevations**. Alaska to Newfoundland, south to California, Idaho, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, and North Carolina. In the Intermountain area known mainly along the northern border, missing from most of our range. **May-August**.