



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

Carex utriculata Boott
Beaked sedge, bladder sedge

OTHER NAMES: Formerly called *C. rostrata* Stokes.

HABIT: Culms arising singly or few together from stout, deep-seated rhizomes, sometimes forming a dense sod. **Culms:** Stout, erect, bluntly triangular below the spikes, smooth, light brown or red-tinged at the thick and spongy base, 3-12 dm tall, exceeded by the upper leaves, slightly **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: 4-10, not clustered. **Blades:** Stiff, flat, thick, glabrous, septate-nodulose, 2-12 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Concave or truncate at the mouth; basal sheaths sometimes cross-filamentose.

BRACTS: Leaflike, strongly sheathing, exceeding the inflorescence.

SPIKES: Several, yellowish green becoming stramineous or reddish purple, remote, forming an elongate inflorescence. **Staminate:** 2-4; terminal narrowly linear, 1-7 cm long, 2-4 mm thick, peduncled; lateral smaller. **Pistillate or androgynous:** 2-5, lateral, erect, cylindric and oblong, 2-10 cm long, 1-1.5 cm thick, short-peduncled to sessile, widely separate; perigynia ascending-spreading to squarrose-spreading at maturity.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate or lanceolate with an acute to long-acuminate or short-awned tip, narrower than and either longer or shorter than the perigynia, light brown or reddish brown with a 3-nerved center and hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Broadly ellipsoid to ovoid or subglobose, strongly inflated, abruptly contracted at the apex, membranous but firm, glabrous, shining, yellowish green, straw-colored or reddish-tinged at maturity, 3.5-8 mm long, 1.3-3.5 mm wide. **Nerves:** 8-16, prominent on both surfaces; evident marginal nerves lacking. **Beaks:** Conic or cylindric, smooth, bidentate, 1-2 mm long; teeth slender, stiff, erect, 0.1-0.8 mm long.

ACHENES: Obovoid with blunt angles, trigonous, substipitate, yellowish brown, 1.1-2 mm long, 0.9-1.3 mm wide; the style persistent, bony, usually becoming flexuous at maturity. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: One of the most common species in the Intermountain area. Wet meadows, swamps, marshes, and wet soil or shallow water at the margins of ponds, lakes, and streams. **Lowlands to moderate elevations.** Circumboreal. In North America extending south to California, Nevada, southern Utah, New Mexico, Nebraska, Indiana, and Delaware. **June-August.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 11.