



Carex vesicaria. (A) Inflorescences, (B) pistillate scales, (C) perigynia (center perigynium is subtended by a pistillate scale), (D) achenes. B: Left—dorsal view; center and right—ventral views. C and D: Left and center—dorsal views; right—ventral view.

Carex vesicaria L.
Blister sedge, inflated sedge

HABIT: Loosely cespitose from short, stout rhizomes. **Culms:** Sharply triangular, slightly reddish-tinged at the somewhat spongy base, 3-10 dm tall, **aphyllopodic**.

LEAVES: 4-10, not clustered. **Blades:** Flat, glabrous, tending to be septate-nodulose, 1-7 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Hyaline ventrally, truncate or concave at the mouth; basal sheath becoming cross-filamentose.

BRACTS: Well-developed, not sheathing, elongate, exceeding the inflorescence.

SPIKES: Several, erect, sessile or short-pedunculate, yellow brown to purplish brown, remote. **Terminal: Staminate** (sometimes with a few perigynia), 2-4, narrowly linear, 2-7 cm long, 2.5-4 mm thick, the upper terminal and peduncled, the lateral sessile. **Lateral: Pistillate**, 1-3, oblong-cylindric to narrowly cylindric, 2-7.5 cm long, 5-15 mm wide, loosely 30- to 100-flowered; perigynia appressed or ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate to lanceolate with the tip acute to acuminate or slightly awned, narrower and shorter than or equaling the perigynia, reddish brown to yellowish brown with lighter center and hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Lanceolate or ovoid-lanceolate, turgid-inflated below, gradually tapering to the apex, glabrous and shining, punctulate, yellowish green or stramineous to castaneous or reddish brown, 4-11 mm long, 1.7-3 mm wide. **Nerves:** Strongly 10- to 20-ribbed on each surface, prominent marginal nerves lacking. **Beaks:** Slender, conic, smooth, bidentate, 1.8-2.5 mm long; teeth 0.3-1.5 mm long, slender, stiff, erect to outcurved.

ACHENES: Obovoid with blunt angles, trigonous, yellow to brown, 1.7-3 mm long, 1.1-1.8 mm wide, continuous with the long, persistent, bony style that becomes bent or flexuous at maturity. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Frequent to common in wet soil or shallow water of bogs or swamps and along margins of ponds or streams from **lowlands to moderate elevations**. Circumboreal, extending south in North America to California, Arizona, New Mexico, Missouri, Indiana, and Delaware. **June-August**.

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 11.