

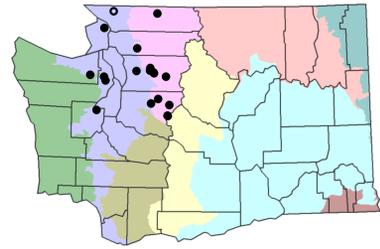
Carex pauciflora Lightf.

few-flowered sedge

Cyperaceae - sedge family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S2



General Description: Adapted from Flora of North America (1993+): Perennial with rhizomes 0.2-10 cm long. Stems single or in loose tufts, 1-4 (6) dm tall, slightly roughened toward the top. Lowest leaves reduced to bladeless or nearly bladeless sheaths. Upper foliage leaves 1-2 (3) per stem; blades up to 13 cm x 0.5-1.6 mm, hairless.

Floral Characteristics: Spike single, terminal, with (1) 2-4 male flowers above, (1) 2-6 (7) female flowers below. Female scales wider than and 2/3 the length of the perigynia; lower ones deciduous. Perigynia reflexed at maturity, light green, becoming straw-colored or pale brown, narrowly elongate-oblong, (5) 5.9-7.8 x 0.7-1.1 mm, long-tapering, and spongy for 1-2 mm at the base. Beak indistinct. Stigmas 3. Rachilla vestigial.

Fruits: Achenes 3-angled, 2-2.4 x 0.8-1 mm; style exerted 0.2-1.3 mm beyond the beak. Identifiable late May to early September.

Identification Tips: The small number of flowers per plant is a good diagnostic feature. *C. pyrenaica* and *C. nigricans* have shorter perigynia (3-4.5 mm long) that are not spongy at the base, and are high-montane or alpine plants that do not grow in sphagnum bogs.

Range: Throughout northern Eurasia, much of Canada, WA, MT, and the northeastern U.S.

Habitat/Ecology: Wet acidic environments at low to middle elevations, including sphagnum bogs and acidic peat; usually on open mats, but also in partial shade. Elevations in WA: 75-1390 m (250-4550 ft). Associates include western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), alpine laurel (*Kalmia microphylla*), bog Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), cottongrass (*Eriophorum chamissonis*), small cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), roundleaf sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), white beaksedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), and sphagnum moss.

Comments: Threats include campfires and trampling from recreational use. This species may be extirpated from CT, and is rare in MA, PA, WV, the Yukon, Alberta, Sask., Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 23.

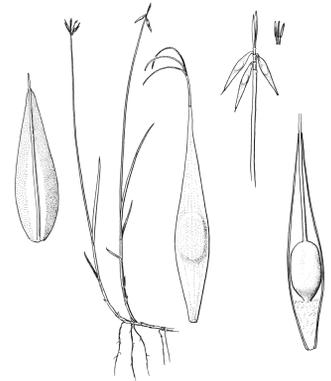


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