

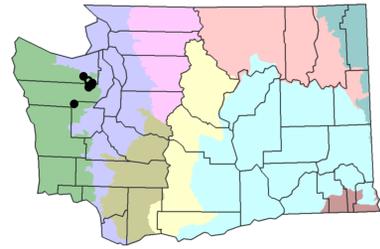
Carex obtusata Lilj.

obtuse 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 stems (3) 10-20 cm tall, scattered on slender rhizomes, with reddish brown or purple bases. Leaves crowded near the ground, blades nearly flat, 0.5-1.5 mm wide.

Floral Characteristics: Spike solitary, androgynous, 8-15 mm long, bractless. Female scales brown, with thin, translucent margins, lanceolate, 2.5-3.5 (4.5) mm, as wide and as long as or slightly shorter than the perigynia. Perigynia 1-6, ascending, ellipsoid, plump, thick-walled and leathery, conspicuously finely veined, becoming shiny and brown, 3-4 mm long. Beak prominent, translucent, cleft to somewhat 2-toothed. Stigmas 3.

Fruits: Achenes 3-angled to rounded, filling the perigynium; rachilla well developed, more than half as long as the achene. Identifiable June to August.

Identification Tips: *C. obtusata* is distinguished by its scattered stems with terminal, solitary spikes; few perigynia per spike positioned below the male flowers; and perigynia walls that are thick, tough, and leathery. *C. breweri* and *C. subnigricans* differ in having numerous, thin-walled perigynia.

Range: Circumboreal: Eurasia, AK, west and central Canada, south to UT, NM, SD, MN.

Habitat/Ecology: Dry or vernal moist grasslands, bluffs, sandy flood plains, vernal moist scree meadows, alpine talus, and ridgetops. Elevations in WA: 1430-2025 m (4700-6640 ft). Associated species include common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), spreading phlox (*Phlox diffusa*), cushion buckwheat (*Eriogonum ovalifolium*), featherleaf kittentails (*Synthyris pinnatifida*), shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa* ssp. *floribunda*), yellowdot saxifrage (*Saxifraga bronchialis*), beautiful sandwort (*Minuartia rubella*), mountain owl's-clover (*Orthocarpus imbricatus*), alpine fescue (*Festuca brachyphylla* ssp. *brachyphylla*), bluegrass (*Poa* spp.), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), fleabane (*Erigeron* spp.), and sedges (*Carex albonigra*, *C. raynoldsii*).

Comments: In WA this species is confined to a small geographic area, where it is reported from a typical high-elevation habitat. It is also rare in WY, MN, and Ontario.

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

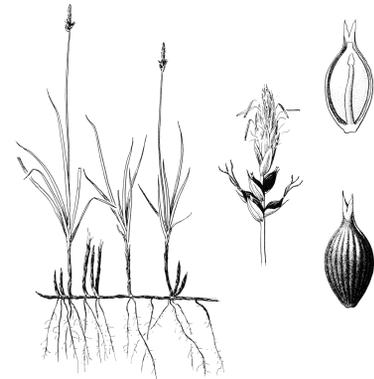


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Sedges of the Pacific Northwest
(Oregon State University Press,
2000)