

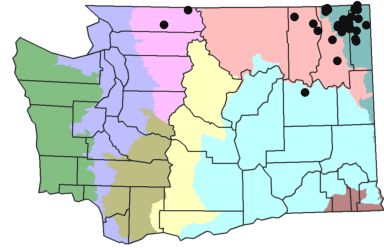
Carex flava L.

yellow sedge

Cyperaceae - sedge family

status: State Sensitive

rank: G5 / S3



General Description: Perennial with clustered stems 1-8 dm tall, not rhizomatous. Basal and stem leaves flat, 2-5.5 mm wide, the basal sheaths pale at the base. Stem leaves nearly as long as the stems.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescence subtended by 1 or more bracts with conspicuous, elongate, spreading blades much surpassing the inflorescence; bracts subtending the spikes in the terminal cluster are sheathless or nearly so. Terminal spike slender, 6-24 mm long, usually with male flowers only, sessile or on peduncles less than 5 mm. Lateral spikes female, 2-5, short and stout, 6-17 mm long, all sessile or on short peduncles, usually closely crowded. Female scales shorter than the perigynia, reddish brown with a firm midrib, margins white to translucent. Perigynia spreading, hooked to reflexed, hairless, 3.7-6.2 mm long, relatively slender and tapering gradually to the poorly defined beak, bright yellow at maturity, prominently several-nerved on the upper surface. Beak 1.4-2.3 mm long, roughened. Stigmas 3.



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Fruits: Achenes 1.2-1.6 mm long, 3-angled, much smaller than the perigynium. Identifiable July to August.

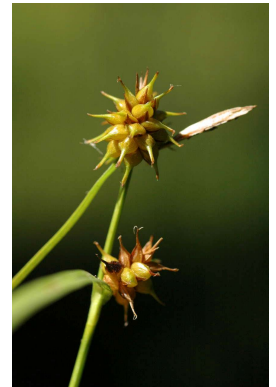
Identification Tips: Diagnostic characteristics include 3-angled achenes, hairless perigynia, sheathless bracts subtending the terminal spikes, and clustered, non-rhizomatous stems. *C. viridula* ssp. *viridula** is similar but distinguished by male spikes on peduncles usually greater than 4.5 mm, stem leaves much shorter than flowering stems, and perigynium beaks usually less than 1.7 mm long and only weakly roughened.

Range: Circumboreal: AK south to WA, ID, WY, east through Canada to Newfoundland, and south to MN, IN, and VA.

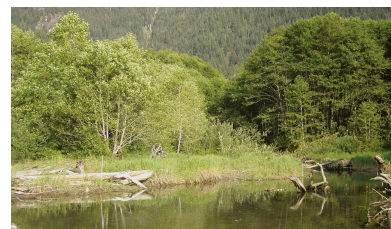
Habitat/Ecology: Wet meadows, forested wetlands, bogs, and shores of streams and lakes; often on limestone substrates. Associated species include western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana* spp. *tenuifolia*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *sericea*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), and rushes (*Juncus* spp.). Elevations in WA: 350-1300 m (1160-4300 ft).

Comments: Threats include livestock grazing, timber harvesting, and hydrologic changes. This species is also rare in the Yukon, ID, WY, Alberta, Manitoba, and several eastern states.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 23; Schmid 1984.



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© Richard Brainerd, Field Guide to
the Sedges of the Pacific Northwest
(Oregon State University Press,
2000)