

## KEY TO GROUPS OF CAREX

- 1a. Stigmas 2; achenes lenticular . . . . . **GROUP I**
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- 1b. Stigmas 3; achenes three-sided, occasionally terete, though their shape may be concealed by flattened perigynia . . . . . **GROUP II**
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## KEY TO SPECIES AND SECTIONS IN GROUP I

- 1a. Spike 1 per culm, terminal; spike bracts absent . . . . . **2**
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- 1b. Spikes 2 or more per culm, terminal and lateral; spike bracts present on lateral spikes; lowest spike bracts usually evident, often conspicuous, even in compact heads composed of densely bunched and indistinguishable spikes (except in *C. maritima*, *C. chordorrhiza* and *C. microptera*) . . . . . **3**
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- 2a. Spike unisexual (occasionally a staminate spike will have a few pistillate flowers at base); perigynia 3–4 mm long, conspicuously spreading in middle of spike . . . . . **C. gynocrates**
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- 2b. Spike androgynous, staminate portion a short point sticking up from globose pistillate base; perigynia 2–3 (rarely 4) mm long, appressed to spreading . . . . . **C. capitata**
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- 3a. Individual spikes distinguishable in an open inflorescence, or indistinguishable in a compact head; spikes in any one inflorescence alike in appearance due to their similar composition (*i.e.* all are gynecandrous, androgynous, pistillate or staminate), sessile. . . . . **7**
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- 3b. Individual spikes distinguishable in an open inflorescence (densely bunched in *C. bicolor*); spikes in any one inflorescence either markedly different in appearance (with terminal spike staminate and lateral spikes pistillate), or subtly different in appearance (with terminal spike gynecandrous and lateral spikes pistillate), sessile or stalked . . . . . **4**
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- 4a. Spongy tissue visibly filling bottom one-third to one-half of the perigynium with achene positioned above it; perigynia less than 4 mm long . . . . . **Section Stellulatae** (*C. echinata*, *C. interior*, *C. sterilis*)
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- 4b. Perigynia not filled with spongy tissue at base . . . . . **5**
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- 5a. Beak 0.2–0.5 mm long, bidentate; style base continuous with achene and persisting as a prong; rare species of far north . . . . . **C. saxatilis**
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**SECTION BICOLORES (GROUP I)**

- 1a. Lowest spike bract blade leaf-like or scale-like, usually shorter than inflorescence, sometimes with dark basal auricles; spikes densely bunched; terminal spike gynecandrous usually with fewer than 1/3 of flowers staminate; restricted to far north. . . . . **C. bicolor**
- 1b. Lowest spike bract blade leaf-like, exceeding inflorescence, lacking dark basal auricles; spikes overlapping, occasionally remote to separate below; terminal spike staminate, or gynecandrous with one-third or more flowers staminate; species not restricted to far north . . . . . **2**
- 2a. Pistillate spikes lax with (0.5) 0.7–1.5 mm between perigynia attachment points midway up rachis; terminal spike usually staminate; mature perigynia obovate to orbiculate, minutely papillose to smooth; in life, perigynia orange (as shown in photograph below), somewhat inflated and fleshy . . . . . **C. aurea**
- 2b. Perigynia spikes denser with 0.2–0.7 mm between perigynia attachment points midway up rachis; terminal spike usually gynecandrous; mature perigynia elliptic to obovate, densely papillose, looking as though covered in white powder; in life, perigynia pale greenish-white . . . . . **C. garberi**

