

**Vascular Plants of Williamson County**  
*Carex bulbostylis* – GLOBOSE CARIC SEDGE [Cyperaceae]

*Carex bulbostylis* Mackenz., GLOBOSE CARIC SEDGE. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, densely cespitose, many-stemmed at base, in range to 20 cm tall having spreading shoots to 280 mm long; monoecious; shoots with 10+ basal leaves and ca. 3 cauline leaves (each associated with an inflorescence), to 8 basal leaves with green blades + lower basal leaves lacking blades, essentially glabrous; rhizomes cylindrical, to 2.5 mm diameter, with white flesh, erect for aerial shoots and covered with fibrous sheaths of leaves and upper basal leaves having axillary bud; adventitious roots from underground nodes. **Stems:** 3-sided, 1 mm diameter, white where covered by leaf sheaths, glabrous. **Leaves:** alternate tristichous, simple with sheath; sheath closed (except the smallest, scalelike sheaths), 10+ mm long, colorless, with to 23 raised veins, truncate at top with membranous tissue, veins somewhat raised on colorless outer surface, of large leaves with membranous margin to 1 mm wide; ligule truncate to obtuse, in range ca. 0.4 mm long; blade folded upward from midrib or later becoming flat, linear, in range 20–100 × 2.2–4.3 mm, entire but short-ciliate near ligule, long-tapered to tip, of cauline leaves sometimes with minute teeth on margins, parallel-veined with 9–17 veins somewhat raised on lower surface below midblade, upper surface smooth, glabrous. **Inflorescence:** unisexual spikes (both flower types never on the same spike), many-flowered. staminate spike linear to narrowly club-shaped, to 20 × 1.8 mm, appearing 3-ridged with alternate tristichous bractlets (floral scales), pistillate spike having (3–)4–7 diminutive flowers at top; bract subtending peduncle closed < 2 mm with green blade to 6 mm long; peduncle of staminate spike exerted from sheath, angled, to 28 mm long, green; bractlet subtending staminate flower, the lowest bractlet deltate-ovate, 3.5–4 × 2–2.5 mm, having green axis with wide membranous margins decreasing upward and diminutive at top of inflorescence, 3-veined at base with a pair of lateral veins to midpoint and only 1-veined at top extending into point at tip, exposed membranous margins often dotted with scarlet cells, with short point at tip; bract subtending pistillate spikelet with colorless, closed sheath ca. 4 mm long, ligule obtuse and membranous, blade long-acuminate, > 35 × 3.3 mm wide, green, 7-veined, minutely toothed on margins, midvein raised and sometimes with minute scabrous teeth; bractlet (floral scale) subtending perigynium with an ovate body and flat linear tip, 3-veined, membranous with green midstripe, tip 0.8–2.8 × 0.25–0.3 mm, not awnlike or stiff; perigynium (= a modified prophyll) obovoid 3-sided, at anthesis 2–2.5 × 1–1.5 mm, light green, conspicuously low-ridged with many veins, lacking visible teeth at orifice, the orifice circular and 0.15 mm across, glabrous. **Staminate flower:** perianth absent; **stamens** 3, free; filaments exerted, threadlike, to 2.8 mm long; anthers dithecal, 2–2.2 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** absent. **Pistillate flower:** perianth absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid 3-sided, ca. 0.35 mm long, greenish, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style 3-branched from greenish bulbous base on top of ovary, the papillate branches 1.5–1.7 mm long, whitish. **Fruit:** achene, loosely enclosed in perigynium; achene strongly 3-sided (trigonous) wider above midpoint, 2.0–2.1 × 1.8–1.9 mm, pale brown, concave on faces with rounded angles, textured with minute point on each cell; lower style (beak) persistent and swollen at base; perigynium obovoid 3-sided, with many raised veins, glabrous.

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