

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Carex festucacea – FESCUE CARIC SEDGE [Cyperaceae]

Carex festucacea Sukkuhr, FESCUE CARIC SEDGE. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, cespitose, many-stemmed at base from shallow rhizome, in range to 35 cm tall; monoecious; shoots with to 7 leaves per shoot at least 2 basal leaves and to 4 cauline leaves, the uppermost 1–2 blades > inflorescence, blade length increasing upward, glabrous; rhizome creeping, horizontal, with very short internodes, to 15+ mm long, to 4 mm diameter, covered with old, fibrous leaf sheaths, flesh whitish; adventitious roots on lower side of rhizome. **Stems (culms):** visible only above sheath of the uppermost canopy leaf (covered by nested, overlapping closed leaf sheaths), lower portion ± 3-sided, nodes 1 mm diameter, hollow (heart-shaped in ×-section; vascular bundles ca. 30) and white, upper portion strongly compressed, strongly ridged, green, tough, hollow except solid just below inflorescence. **Leaves:** alternate, simple with sheath; sheath closed, to 75 mm long, membranous and colorless (where concealed) and green striped (where exposed) = veins, with a conspicuously wide panel of hyaline tissue from node to orifice; ligule at top of sheath membranous, ± truncate on outside, in range ca. 1–2 mm long, on inner side extended as an arch of hyaline tissue onto the base of blade ca. 2 mm projecting ca. 0.5 mm; blade linear, of basal leaves 40–100 mm long, of cauline leaves in range 150–370 × 2–4.3 mm, green not glaucous but sometimes appearing to have whitish stripes between veins, entire and minutely scabrous along margins, acute to acuminate at tip, parallel-veined with midrib sunken on upper surface and strongly raised on lower surface, and other veins raised at least on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** spikes (“spikelets”) in a terminal panicle, 3–7(–10) per panicle, spike many-flowered, with staminate flowers to midpoint and pistillate flowers above midpoint (gynecandrous), narrowly ellipsoid-fusiform, at anthesis in range 8–12 × 1.5–2.5 mm, tip overlapping base of next spike, bracteate, glabrous; peduncle = culm, angular with minutely scabrous ridges; rachis internodes < spike, with several, minutely scabrous ridges; bract subtending sessile spike, sheath closed (including rachis), membranous, ± 1 mm long, blade with raised midvein (keeled) ending in an awn, bract < spike and decreasing upward, awns in range to 7 mm long; “bractlets” (“scales” or, technically in sedges, bracts) helically alternate and overlapping, acute-ovate and obtuse-ovate at base gradually changing upward to broadly lanceolate, in range ca. 4 × 2 mm decreasing upward to 3 × 1.4 mm, membranous with green midstripe (vein), of pistillate flowers midvein extended as a short point (not an awn), midvein at tip and point minutely scabrous; pistillate flower enclosed in the saclike perigynium (modified prophyll),

. **Staminate flower:** perianth absent; **stamens** 3 (sometimes interpreted as 3 united flowers); filaments fused sideways at least at base, 1.2–2 mm long, subequal, white; anthers basifixed, dithecal, in range 2.2–2.7 mm long, pale light yellow, with tuft of papillate hairs at tip, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** absent. **Pistillate flower:** perianth absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, elliptic compressed front-to-back, 0.5 mm long, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style 3.5–4 mm long, whitish, 2-branched, lower portion ca. 1.2 mm long, the stigmatic branches exerted 1.5–2 mm through orifice of perigynium and aging reddish, ca. 2.5 mm long. **Fruit:** achene,

abscised as a unit enclosed within perigynium, achene biconvex oblong-narrowly ovoid, in range 1–1.2 mm long, light brown; perigynium ovate in outline and winged below midpoint, in range ca. 2.5×1.5 mm, upper portion (“beak”) flat, triangular green aging brownish with 2 colorless points at orifice, minutely scabrous along edges, beak ca. 1 mm from top to achene, lower portion with fruit chamber somewhat inflated, wings 0.3–0.5 mm wide; in fruit spike obovoid in outline,

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