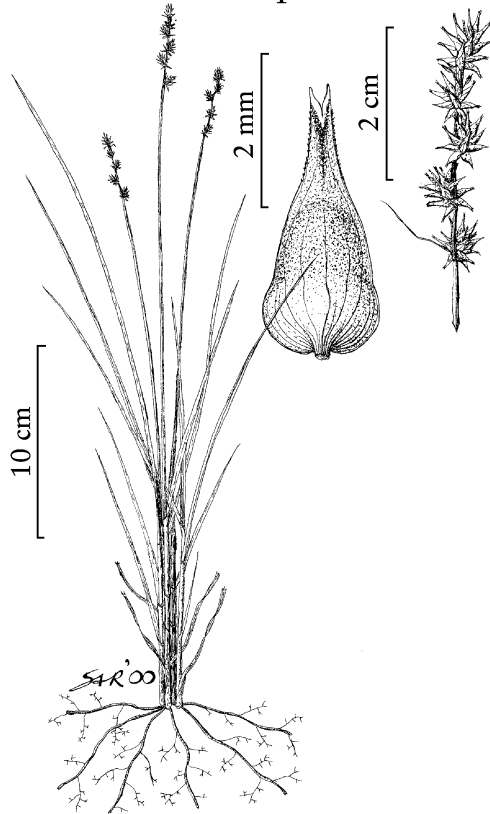


*Carex echinata*  
subsp. *echinata*



Courtesy of the Flora of North America  
Association, Vol. 23:328.  
Illustrator Susan A. Reznicek

**LITTLE PRICKLY SEDGE**

*Carex echinata* Murr. ssp. *echinata*  
SEEDGE FAMILY (CYPERACEAE)

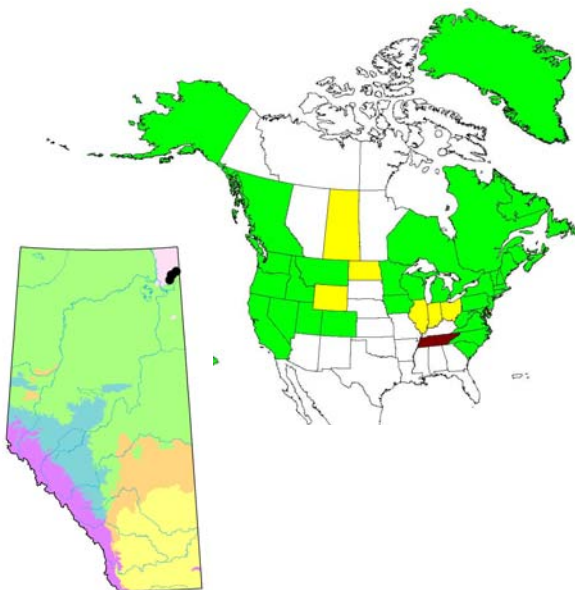
**Plants:** Perennial, **densely tufted** herb with fibrous roots; flowering stems 10 – 60 {90} cm tall, about equaling the leaves in length.

**Leaves:** 2- 4 {6} leaves per flowering stem, from the **lower half of the stem**; 0.7 – 2.4 {-2.7} mm wide, lower leaves reduced.

**Flower clusters:** Inflorescence 2.5 – 8.0 cm long, composed of **2 – 7 dense ascending star-shaped spikes** on short stalks, **the lower spikes more widely spaced, the upper one unstalked**; spikes 5 – 15 flowered, uppermost spike male and female flowered, with female flowers towards the tip, lower spikes female flowered; **perigynia appressed, wide spreading and the lower reflexed**; bracts subtending the lowest spike hairlike, up to 2 cm long, upper ones reduced and scalelike; female **scales shorter than the perigynia**, pointed to awned, **yellowish-brown**, with narrow, opaque or dull pale margins and tips.

**Fruits:** Perigynia 2.9 – 3.6 {-4} mm long, plano-convex, egg-shaped with a tapered tip 1-1.5 mm long, the beak inconspicuously bidentate; perigynia may be veined on the adaxial surface, margins often serrulate; stigmas 2.

**Habitat:** Sandy beaches along the north shore of **Lake Athabasca** and on some island shores, on somewhat protected sandy bays on moist sands, often between cobbles or on **moist sands** near creek outlets; Associated species *Carex*



*lenticularis* var. *lipocarpa*, *Juncus filiformis*, *Hypericum majus*, *Sagina nodosa*, *Carex saxatilis* and *Salix planifolia*. Also found in a *Salix* spp. – *Myrica gale* / *Carex* spp. – *Scorpidium scorpioides* rich fen on sand; known elsewhere from bogs, wet sedge meadows, peaty or sandy shores, generally in acidic soils.

**Status:** S1 G5T5

**Notes:** One of three subspecies of *Carex echinata* but the only one found in Alberta; plants of relatively sterile or nutrient poor habitats.

**Distribution:** Athabasca Plains natural subregion; elsewhere widespread in the United States.

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