

Oenothera cespitosa* Nutt. ssp. *cespitosa

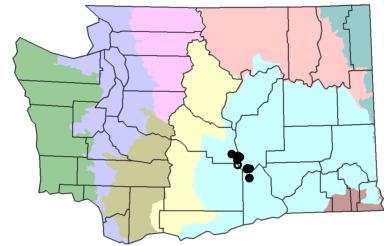
synonym: *Oenothera caespitosa* Nutt. var. *caespitosa*

cespitose evening-primrose

Onagraceae - evening primrose family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive

rank: G5T5 / S2



General Description: Tufted perennial, usually hairless or with hairs 0.2-0.6 mm long; stems 3-6 (21) cm long. Leaves all basal. Petioles slender, (1) 3-7 (10) cm long. Blades oblanceolate, (5) 10-25 x 1-2.5 cm; toothed, pinnatifid, or nearly entire.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers 1-4 (6) per stem, usually sessile but sometimes short-stalked (1-2 mm), opening at sunset. Free hypanthium slender, somewhat flared above, (3) 5-12 cm long, greenish or reddish. Calyx lobes 4, 2.5-3.5 cm long. Petals 4, white, aging to pinkish or purple, heart-shaped (notched at the tip), (1.6) 2.5-4 (4.8) cm long. Anthers 8-13 mm long. Stigma lobes 4, linear, 5-8 mm long. Flowers late April through mid-June.

Fruits: Woody, oblong-ovoid capsules, (1) 2-4 (5) cm long, tapering to a beak 4-8 (12) mm long, sessile or on a short pedicel up to 3 mm long, curved (becoming nearly straight at maturity), angled but not winged, tuberculate on the angles.

Identification Tips: Easily distinguished from other *Oenothera* species by its tufted, perennial habit and large white flowers that become pinkish with age. There are 4 other subspecies of *O. cespitosa*, but only ssp. *marginata** also occurs in WA. subspecies *marginata* is distinguished by the presence of minute glandular hairs and straight capsules 2.5-6.8 cm long, usually on pedicels up to 5.5 cm long.

Range: Alberta, Sask., Manitoba, eastern OR and WA, south to NV and NM, and eastward to the Dakotas and NE.

Habitat/Ecology: Open sagebrush desert; on loose talus, steep sandy or gravelly slopes, the flat terrace of the Columbia River, roadcuts, and other exposed sites. Associated species include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), stiff sagebrush (*Artemisia rigida*), rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), Douglas's buckwheat (*Eriogonum douglasii*), snow buckwheat (*E. niveum*), Thurber's needlegrass (*Achnatherum thurberianum*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), woollypod milk-vetch (*Astragalus purshii*), Carey's balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza careyana*), turpentine cymopterus (*Pteryxia terebinthina*), and silverleaf phacelia (*Phacelia hastata*). Elevations in WA : 125-550 m (410-1800 ft).

Comments: This taxon is also rare in Saskatchewan.

References: Hickman 1993; Wagner et al. 1985.



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