

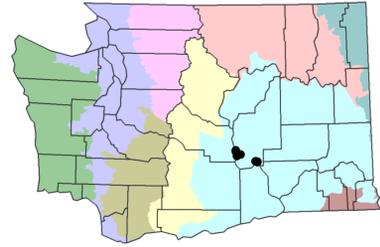
Astragalus geyeri* A. Gray var. *geyeri

Geyer's milk-vetch

Fabaceae - pea family

status: State Threatened, BLM sensitive

rank: G4T4 / S1



General Description: Grayish-hairy to greenish annual with spreading to erect stems 5-20 cm long. Leaves pinnate; leaflets 5-13, linear to oblong, 5-15 mm long, tip obtuse to shallowly notched. Stipules not fused opposite the petiole.

Floral Characteristics: Racemes 2-7 flowered, shorter than the leaves; flowers 6-8 mm long, yellowish white to pale lavender. Calyx scarcely 1/2 as long as the corolla; teeth short, linear-lanceolate, about 1/3 as long as the tube. Blooms April to July.

Fruits: Pods sessile, about 2 cm long, membranous, greatly inflated, slightly compressed, curved to crescent-shaped, 1-celled, the lower suture not intruded. Plants flower within 4-6 weeks of seed germination; fruits mature about 6-8 weeks after germination.

Identification Tips: Most easily identified with mature fruits. To determine if the stipules are fused, look at the very lowest stipule on the stem. This is the only *Astragalus* with an annual root and strongly incurved, papery, inflated, single-chambered pod. Also recognized by its few distant leaflets and minute flowers concealed among the leaves. *A. sclerocarpus* has longer flowers (10-14 mm) and longer (2-3 cm x 7-9 mm), stalked, strongly compressed pods that are not inflated.

Range: Disjunct in WA; this is a Great Basin and Snake River Plain species from southeast OR to CA and NV, eastward to southern ID, WY, and CO.

Habitat/Ecology: Depressions in mobile or stabilized dunes, sandy flats, and valley floors. Associated species include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), purple sage (*Salvia dorii*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). Weedy annuals are often abundant. Aspect varies from southeast to northwest; slopes are generally flat (occasionally up to 30%). Elevations in WA: 150-335 m (500-1100 ft). Grows in the hottest and most arid valleys, where its life span is ordinarily 3-4 months. In unusually dry years, plants may only grow 2-5 cm tall before they bloom.

Comments: Threats include habitat conversion to agriculture, off-road vehicles, and livestock grazing. This species is also rare in CA, MT, and OR.

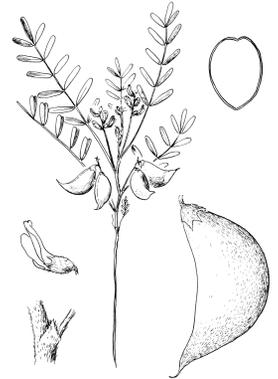


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