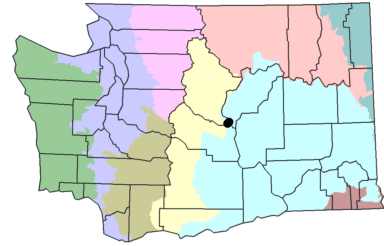


Astragalus sinuatus Piper

Whited's milk-vetch

Fabaceae - pea family

status: State Endangered, Federal Species of Concern,
BLM sensitive
rank: G1 / S1



General Description: Taprooted perennial, grayish hairy throughout, with several spreading to decumbent stems 2-4.5 dm long. Leaves pinnate, 2-7 cm long. Leaflets 11-19, 6-16 mm long, obovate to oblanceolate, tips truncate with a shallow notch. Stipules 2-4.5 mm long, somewhat decurrent but not fused.

Floral Characteristics: Racemes with 8-16 flowers; flowers ascending, white to pale cream, wing petals shorter than the banner, banner 16.5-20 mm long. Calyx 9-11.5 mm long, tube 7-8.5 mm long, the teeth 1/4 the length of the tube. Flowers mid-April through early May.

Fruits: Pods pubescent and sickle-shaped (not coiled), stalked, pendulous or loosely spreading, 24-27 x 4-5 mm, only shallowly notched below. Fruits are present through late July.

Identification Tips: Most easily identified with mature fruits. To determine if the stipules are fused, look at the very lowest stipule on the stem. *A. leibergii* can be distinguished by its more numerous, linear leaflets; lower stipules fused into a 2-toothed sheath; flowers nodding at maturity; erect growth habit, including the flowering stem; erect pods that are not sickle-shaped; and a distinct preference for more mesic habitats.

Range: Local WA endemic from an area of less than 25 km² (10 mi.²).

Habitat/Ecology: Rocky hillsides with big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), sulphur lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus*), yellow fleabane (*Erigeron linearis*), longleaf phlox (*Phlox longifolia*), arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*), and woollypod milk-vetch (*Astragalus purshii*). Soils consist of wind-deposited silts mixed with small amounts of volcanic ash over basalt bedrock. Elevations: 240-610 m (800-2000 ft). Periodic fire (30-90 year frequency interval) probably played a historical role in maintaining habitat for this species.

Comments: Fire suppression and grazing at the sites have led to increased cover of sagebrush and weedy annuals; the resulting increase in fuels would produce a hotter fire than the species historically encountered.



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