**Chaenactis thompsonii** Cronquist
Thompson's chaenactis
Asteraceae - aster family
status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive
rank: G2G3 / S2S3

**General Description:** Taprooted perennial with branching caudex and many stems, 1-3 dm tall; herbage thinly covered with whitish, fine, woolly hairs. Leaves nearly all borne on the stem, flat, once-pinnatifid with a broad midrib, up to 5 cm long.

**Floral Characteristics:** Heads discoid, few or solitary on each stem. Involucre 10-14 mm high; bracts narrow, herbaceous, not overlapping. Flowers all perfect (but outer sometimes enlarged and nearly ligulate), pink or whitish, anthers shortly sagittate, style branches externally hairy. Flowers early June to August.

**Fruits:** Club-shaped achenes, cylindrical to somewhat compressed, pappus of 10-16 transparent scales.

**Identification Tips:** Both *Chaenactis douglasii* and *C. ramosa* have curled leaf segments, while *C. thompsonii* leaves are flat (in one plane). *C. douglasii* stems are erect, solitary to few, with bipinnatifid or pinnately dissected leaves, and outer involucral bracts sometimes with stalked glands. In contrast, *C. thompsonii* stems are numerous, somewhat lax but not mat-forming, leaves are only once-pinnatifid, and outer involucral bracts are not glandular.

**Range:** Local endemic of the Wenatchee Mts.; 2 occurrences from elsewhere in WA.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Dry rocky slopes and ridges at elevations of 880-2130 m (2900-7000 ft), mostly in serpentine soils. Slopes are moderate to steep, aspects vary, and vegetation is generally sparse and xerophytic. Associated species include bluegrass (*Poa* spp.), wheatgrass (*Agropyron* spp.), buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), snow dwarf-primrose (*Douglasia nivalis*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and lupine (*Lupinus* spp). This species grows almost exclusively on high-magnesium, low-calcium substrates of serpentine and peridotite and is a strong indicator of serpentine substrates in the Wenatchee Mts.

**Comments:** The limited range, restricted habitat, and low total numbers of plants account for the sensitive status of this species. *Chaenactis* is from the Greek *chaino*, meaning to gape and *actis*, meaning ray. These refer to the large flower openings and irregular raylike flowers of some species. The specific epithet *thompsonii* refers to the 20th-century Pacific Northwest plant collector J. W. Thompson.


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Adapted from *Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington*
http://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/CAMFIE.html