

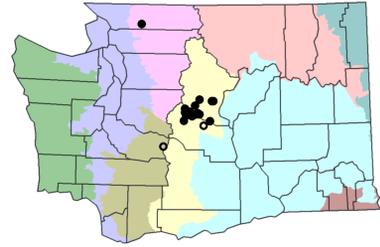
Chaenactis thompsonii Cronquist

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 (*Erigonum* 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.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 21.



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