

Erigeron basalticus Hoover

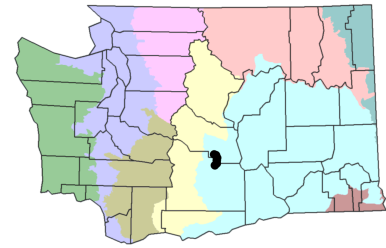
basalt daisy

Asteraceae - aster family

status: State Threatened, Federal Species of Concern,

BLM sensitive

rank: G2 / S2



General Description: Taprooted perennial herb with 1 to several sprawling or pendent stems. Stems 10-15 cm long, branched, and leafy, especially toward the tip. Herbage finely glandular and covered with stiff, spreading hairs. Leaves up to 4 x 1.5 cm (but most are about 2.5 cm long), wedge-shaped, and irregularly 3-lobed at the tip.

Floral Characteristics: Branches terminate in a single radiate flower head. Disk 8-12 mm wide; involucre 5-6 mm high, densely glandular, sometimes with long hairs. Ray flowers usually 25-30, white, drying pink or pinkish purple, each about 5-7 x 1.5 mm. Disk corollas 3-4 mm long. Flowering begins early May and peaks late May to the middle of June. Occasional individuals can be found flowering throughout the summer.

Fruits: Achenes with 10-15 straight or nearly straight pappus bristles.

Identification Tips: *E. basalticus* is distinguished from most other *Erigeron* species by its 3-lobed, wedge-shaped leaves. No other *Erigeron* with lobed or dissected leaves occurs within its habitat and range. *E. basalticus* can also be distinguished by its lack of a basal cluster of leaves, very leafy flowering stalks, and straight (not curled or twisted) pappus bristles.

Range: Endemic to a small area in WA, approximately 17 x 4.5 km (11 x 3 mi.).

Habitat/Ecology: Crevices and cracks in basalt cliffs on canyon walls, with northerly, easterly and westerly aspects, at 380 to 460 m (1250-1500 ft). Exclusively along the Yakima River Canyon and Selah Creek, in basalt from the Yakima Basalt Formation of the late Miocene. *E. basalticus* typically occurs by itself, but other species nearby may include Columbian goldenbush (*Ericameria resinosa*), roundleaf alumroot (*Heuchera cylindrica*), cutleaf beardtongue (*Penstemon richardsonii*), cutleaf thelypody (*Thelypodium laciniatum*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*).

Comments: Maintenance of the physical integrity of its basalt cliff substrate is of primary importance. Threatened by basalt mining, railroad and highway maintenance and construction, and potential spray drift from adjacent agricultural fields.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 20.



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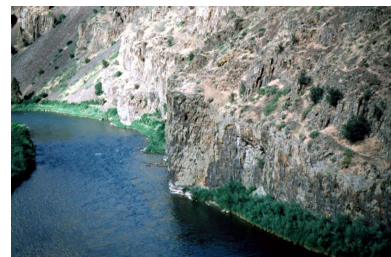


photo by Tracy Rush