

Micromonolepis pusilla (Torrey ex S. Watson) Ulbr.

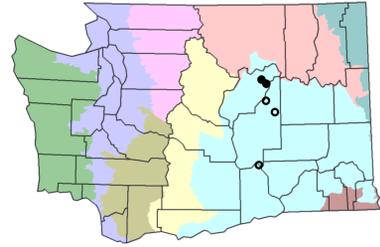
synonym: *Monolepis pusilla* Torr. ex S. Watson

red poverty-weed

Chenopodiaceae - goosefoot family

status: State Threatened, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S1



General Description: Dichotomously branched, rounded annual 3-20 cm tall, surfaces somewhat powdery or mealy, becoming smooth at maturity, often reddish. Leaves alternate, 3-12 mm long, blades oblong to ovate, entire, rounded at the tip, narrowed abruptly to a very short petiole. Lower leaves are usually deciduous before or shortly after anthesis.

Floral Characteristics: Numerous, minute flowers; 1-5 in the axils of much-reduced bracts. Tepals linear, 0.2-0.5 mm long, typically 3 (sometimes 1-2) clustered toward one side of the flower, with the central being the largest. Stamens often 2.

Fruits: Reddish brown utricles, covered with small tubercles. Seeds about 0.5 mm broad, dark brown. In WA this species has been identified April to June.

Identification Tips: *Monolepis nuttalliana* and *M. spathulata* are related, but are not dichotomously branched, their leaves are evident, they usually have over 5 flowers per axil, and usually 1 spatulate tepal. *Micromonolepis pusilla* can be distinguished from these others by its repeated dichotomous branching and resulting rounded appearance. Additionally, *M. pusilla* has inconspicuous leaves, 1-5 flowers per axil, and 1-3 linear tepals.

Range: South-central WA to eastern CA and east through southern ID and NV to UT, WY, and CO.

Habitat/Ecology: Desert regions, in saline or alkaline clay soils, salt-encrusted soils, or edges of alkaline ponds. Elevations in WA: 600-700 m (1950-2210 ft). Common associates include cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), Pursh seepweed (*Suaeda depressa*), and fourpart phacelia (*Phacelia tetramera*). This species is adapted to extreme conditions. In some sites it is limited to growing directly beneath greasewood shrubs, due to cattle trampling and soil compaction between the shrubs.

Comments: Known from 2 recent and 3 historical occurrences in WA. This species is also rare in CA, UT, and WY, and possibly extirpated from CO.

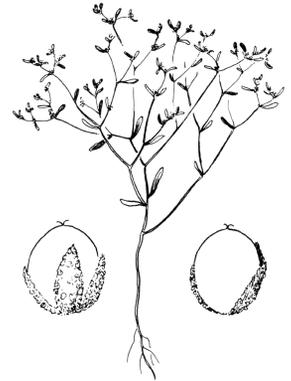


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