

Ranunculus hebecarpus Hook.

downy buttercup

Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family)

Status: State Review Group 1

Rank: G5SNR

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1964) and Hickman (1993): *Ranunculus hebecarpus* is a delicate annual 3 to 12 in. (8-30 cm) tall, with threadlike roots. The plant is moderately branched with slender, erect, soft-hairy stems. The basal and lower leaf petioles are $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 in. (1.5-8 cm) long, while the blades are only up to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (0.5-2 cm) long. The leaves are soft-hairy, generally heart-shaped to kidney-shaped, and deeply 3 to 5 lobed. The lobes or leaflets are oblanceolate to wedge-shaped and toothed to lobed. The upper stem leaves are alternate, up to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (2 cm) long and more than 1 in. (3 cm) broad, and 3-lobed with the lobes or leaflets that are entire to toothed. The flower pedicel is slender and $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (1-2 cm) long. The flower receptacle (enlarged end of the stem that bears the floral parts) is rounded and glabrous, while the $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (1-2 mm) leafy bracts beneath the flowers have short, soft hairs. There are up to 5 yellow petals about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (1-2 mm) long and less than 1 mm wide, but the petals may be lacking entirely. There are 3 to 11 clustered, compressed, circular fruits about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (2 mm) in diameter with a beaked tip that is somewhat straight to curved. The fruit is pimply with curved or hooked minute hairs protruding from the pimples.

Identification Tips: There are many species of *Ranunculus* that occur in Washington in the same counties as *R. hebecarpus*. However, *R. arvensis* and *R. muricatus* are the only other species in this area that also have mature fruit that is bristly, spiny, or pimply. *R. hebecarpus* can be distinguished from these species by the size of its fruit. *R. hebecarpus* has fruit that is about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (2 mm) long while *R. arvensis* and *R. muricatus* both have fruit well over 2 mm. A technical key and mature fruits are recommended for positive identification.

Phenology: *Ranunculus hebecarpus* blooms from March through May in Washington.

Range: This species is found from eastern Washington and adjacent Idaho, and south to Arizona and Baja California. In Washington, it has been found in Klickitat, Whitman, and Garfield counties.

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Known distribution of
Ranunculus
hebecarpus
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Habitat: *Ranunculus hebecarpus* is found in shaded areas on moist to dry hillsides and in woodland areas at elevations less than 4300 feet (1300 m) throughout its range. Elevations at which this species were historically found in Washington are unknown.

Ecology: Buttercup species with curves or hooks on the fruit are adapted to animal dispersal.

State Status Comments: This species is known in Washington from less than five historic occurrences. Because *Ranunculus hebecarpus* was recently added to the Washington rare plant list, not much is known about the degree of its rarity in the state at this time.

Inventory Needs: Historic sites need to be revisited.

Threats and Management Concerns: The greatest threat to this species is habitat degradation due to timber harvest, road construction, and invasive species.

References:

Hickman, J.C. 1993. *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1400 pp.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 2: Salicaceae to Saxifragaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 597 pp.

Kartesz, J.T. 2004. *Synthesis of North American Flora*. Phyllosystems Corporation. 1.996.

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