

## ***Sericocarpus rigidus*** Lindl.

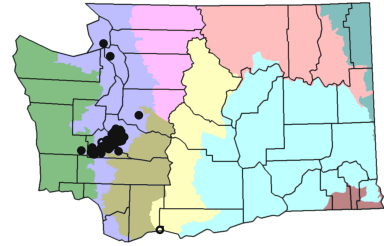
synonym: *Aster curtus* Cronquist

white-top aster

Asteraceae - aster family

status: State Sensitive, Federal Species of Concern, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G3 / S3



**General Description:** Rhizomatous perennial herb, found in colonies of 50-200 or more shoots, spreading vegetatively; stems usually unbranched, topped by a close terminal cluster of flowering heads. Flowering shoots 12-25 cm tall; nonflowering shoots less than half as tall. Leaves alternate, margins smooth; lowermost reduced and usually deciduous, largest a little above the base of the stem, 2.5-3.5 cm x 5-9 mm, oblanceolate, tapering to a sessile base. Upper leaves gradually reduced.

**Floral Characteristics:** Flowers in a terminal cluster (rarely more branched) with 5-20 small radiate heads. Involucres 6-9 mm tall, bracts overlapping. Ray flowers 1-3, white, inconspicuous, 1-3 mm long, shorter than the pappus. Disk flowers 9-21, pale yellowish with purple anthers. Shoots emerge by April; flowers July to August.

**Fruits:** Smooth achenes, densely gray-hairy; pappus white.

**Identification Tips:** Distinguished by the tight terminal cluster of flower heads with few, inconspicuous ray flowers, and its habit of forming large colonies by means of rhizomes. Only 10-30% of the shoots in typical colonies bear flowering heads.

**Range:** Restricted to the Willamette Valley and Puget Lowlands, from OR to Vancouver Island, B.C.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Relatively flat, open grasslands of lowlands, usually in gravelly, glacial outwash soils. Elevations in WA: 10-170 m (30-550 ft). Habitats are seasonally mesic but dry during late summer. Puget Trough habitats are generally dominated by Roemer's fescue (*Festuca roemeri*), with Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and/or Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) present. Historically, fire helped to maintain these grasslands by restricting Douglas-fir invasion. Associated species include snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.), woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), and hookedspur violet (*Viola adunca*).

**Comments:** Threats include invasion by Douglas-fir, Scot's broom, and others. This species is listed as threatened in OR and Canada.

**References:** Douglas et al. 1998-2002, vol. 1; Clampitt 1987, 1993; Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 20.



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