

***Swertia perennis* L.**  
swertia  
Gentianaceae (Gentian Family)

**Status:** State Review Group 1  
**Rank:** G5S1?

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1969) and Hickman et al. (1993): This rhizomatous, generally perennial plant is 4 to 20 in. (10-13 cm) high, with a thick, glabrous stem and one to few rosettes of basal leaves. The basal leaves are spoon-shaped to obovate with rounded tips. The cauline leaves are elliptic to obolanceolate shaped and opposite to alternate with pointed tips. The inflorescence is open and the flower pedicels are 1/16 to 1¼ in. (2-30 mm) long. The flowers can have either 4 petals and sepals or 5 petals and sepals. The calyx is 1/8 to ½ in. (4-8 mm) long. The petals are bluish-white to violet-blue with darker veins, and variously splotched with greenish or white. The lobes of the petals are lance-oblong and acute and are ¼ to ½ in. (8-11 mm) long. The corolla tube has pits on the surface, with small scales below them, and is completely surrounded by fringed hoods. The style is less than 1 mm long and the compressed lance-ellipsoid shaped capsule is ¼ to ½ in. (7-12 mm) long.

**Identification Tips:** *Swertia perennis* is the only species of *Swertia* in North America. *Swertia* can be distinguished from the closely related genus *Frasera* by its small, thick style that is less than 1 mm long. Species in *Frasera* have a slender style that is greater than 2 mm long.

**Phenology:** This species flowers from July to August.

**Range:** This species is found scattered throughout western North America. In Washington it has been found in Snohomish and Chelan counties.

**Habitat:** There is little known of the habitat of this species in Washington. One occurrence was found at an elevation of 5680 feet (1731 m).

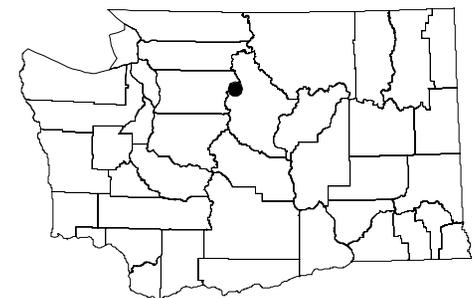
**Ecology:** This species is found in mountainous sub-alpine areas in moist meadowland, bogs, stream banks, and other moist places.

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swertia



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Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish

Known distribution  
of *Swertia perennis*  
in Washington



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

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swertia



Gene Yates

***Swertia perennis***

swertia

**State Status Comments:** Because this species 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:** Additional inventory is needed in appropriate habitats in Washington.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Potential threats to this species include hydrological alterations and recreation.

**References:**

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1959. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 4: Ericaceae Through Campanulaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 510 pp.

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