

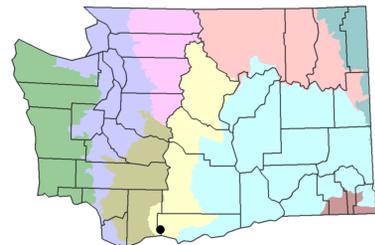
Veratrum insolitum Jeps.

Siskiyou false-hellebore

Liliaceae - lily family

status: State Threatened, BLM strategic, USFS strategic

rank: G3 / S1



General Description: Robust, rhizomatous perennial 10-17 dm tall; stems grayish green, covered with tangled, woolly hairs above. Leaves numerous, prominently veined, sessile, alternate, broadly egg-shaped, 10-35 x 7-21 cm, reduced above.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescence a branched panicle 2-5 dm long with many ascending grayish woolly racemes. Flowers yellowish white. Tepals 6, broadly obovate, not narrowed at the base, 6-15 mm, the margins (at least of inner tepals) irregularly fringed or ciliate. Ovary densely covered with long, soft, woolly hairs. Flowers July to September. The only recorded population in WA flowers in early July.

Fruits: Capsules woolly, oblong-ovoid, 2-3 cm; seeds flat, broadly winged, 10-15 mm.

Identification Tips: *Veratrum viride* is distinguished by its drooping inflorescence branches, hairless ovaries and capsules, and its tepals, which are green to yellowish green and narrowed (clawed) at the base. *V. californicum* has hairless to sparsely straight-hairy ovaries; hairless capsules; and usually entire, unfringed tepal margins (sometimes minutely toothed). All measurements of the WA population of *V. insolitum* are larger than noted in Hitchcock *et al.* (1955+, vol. 1), according to site records.

Range: Primarily in southwest OR and northwestern CA. Peripheral and disjunct in WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Openings in thickets, moist meadows, stream banks, and mixed evergreen forest edges, at 0 to 1500 m (0-4900 ft). In WA it grows on an open to semiopen dry slope at 400 m (1300 ft), with Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), and oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*).

Comments: In WA there is 1 known population with fewer than 50 plants; the population appears to be in decline. It is also rare in CA. Threats include timber harvest, herbicides, horticultural collections, and trampling. This plant is highly toxic to both humans and livestock.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 26.



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