

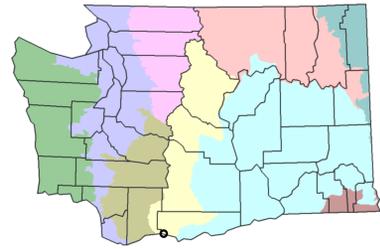
Astragalus diaphanus Douglas ex Hook.

transparent milk-vetch

Fabaceae - pea family

status: State Possibly Extirpated, BLM strategic

rank: G4 / SX



General Description: Prostrate annual or biennial from a stout taproot, herbage with small appressed hairs to nearly hairless, stems numerous, 1-4 dm long. Leaves pinnate, 2-4 cm long; leaflets 9-13, obovate, 4-12 mm long, usually hairless on the upper surface. Stipules tiny, 1-2 mm long, not fused.

Floral Characteristics: Racemes compactly 5-20 flowered; peduncles equaling or shorter than the leaves. Flowers 4-8 mm long, white but the banner pinkish- or purplish-veined and the keel purplish-tipped. Calyx 2-3 mm long, often purplish, the teeth linear, somewhat shorter than the tube.

Fruits: Pods sessile, linear-oblong in outline, strongly curved into an arch, membranous, translucent, 1.5-2 cm x 3-4 mm, heart-shaped and 2-celled in cross section. Identifiable April to June.

Identification Tips: Most easily identified with mature fruits; however, pods may vary greatly in outline and curvature. Pod walls are so thin in texture that seeds within can be seen. Also recognized by its diffuse growth habit; its short and broad, rather distant, usually red-margined leaflets; and its tiny, whitish, lavender-striate flowers. To determine if the stipules are fused, look at the very lowest stipule on the stem.

Range: John Day River valley from near Dayville, Grant Co., OR, downstream to the Columbia River, west to The Dalles in Wasco Co., OR, and historically on the north bank of the Columbia near Bingen, WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Sandy or gravelly soils on gravel bars, alluvial slopes, and overlying basaltic rocks. Elevations: 50-1220 m (150-4000 ft). This is a nitrogen-fixing species that occurs on substrates suspected thought to be low in nitrogen. It responds well to small disturbances to the seedbed.

Comments: There are no extant sites in WA.

References: Croft et al. 1997; Barneby 1964.

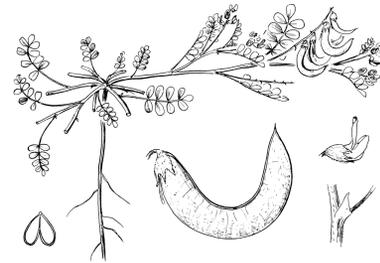


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