

# ***Castilleja cryptantha*** Pennell & G.N. Jones

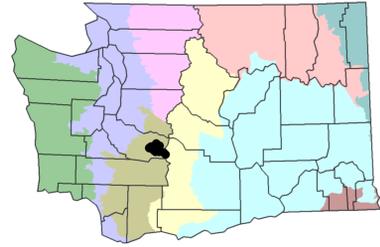
obscure paintbrush

Orobanchaceae - broomrape family

status: State Sensitive, Federal Species of Concern, BLM

sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G2G3 / S2S3



**General Description:** Perennial with several unbranched, clustered stems, 1-1.5 dm tall, with long, soft, sticky hairs throughout. Leaves alternate, lower ones linear, upper ones broader, sometimes with a pair of short lateral side lobes. Bracts subtending the inflorescence broader than the leaves, lanceolate with a pointed tip, with a pair of broad lateral lobes, greenish to dull purplish brown.

**Floral Characteristics:** Flowers borne in upright terminal spikes, not greatly elongate and not spreading, calyx not hidden by the bracts. Calyx pale yellow, 12-15 mm long, deeply cleft above and below; primary lobes divided at the apex into 2 pointed segments 1 mm long. Corolla tubular, elongate and narrow, about equaling and wholly included within the calyx, bilobed, the lower lip prominent, about 2/3 the length of the upper lip. Upper lip densely hairy, with a beaklike tip enclosing the anthers. Stigmas included within the corolla. Stamens 4. Flowers July to August.

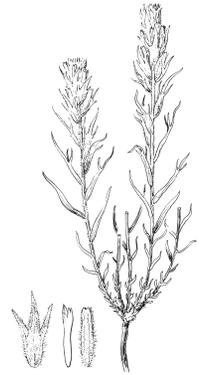


Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
©1959 University of Washington  
Press

**Fruits:** Many-seeded capsules.

**Identification Tips:** In contrast to the usual condition in the genus, the stigma on *C. cryptantha* is usually not extended while in bloom, but remains hidden within the corolla. *C. chrysantha* and *C. pulchella* have longer corollas (17-22 mm), stigmas exserted beyond the upper lip of the corolla, and broadly obtuse or rounded calyx lobes.

**Range:** Endemic to Mount Rainier National Park and vicinity.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Grassy subalpine meadows, parklands in the upper subalpine zones, and around the edges of alpine tarns and basins, often near stream channels and seeps. Soils are poorly developed, derived from pumice and organic debris. Generally on level ground with low, lush, herbaceous and shrubby cover, in the subalpine fir-Sitka valerian (*Abies lasiocarpa*-*Valeriana sitchensis*) community type. Associates include heather (*Phyllodoce empetriformis*, *Cassiope mertensiana*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja parviflora* var. *oreopola*), sedges (*Carex nigricans*, *C. spectabilis* and others), gentian (*Gentiana calycosa*), tundra aster (*Oreostemma alpigenum*\*), lousewort (*Pedicularis* spp.), and cinquefoil (*Potentilla flabellifolia*). Elevations: 1480-2060 m (4860-6760 ft).

**Comments:** Threats include trampling by hikers, and elk.

**References:** Hemstrom 1982; Pennell & Jones 1937.



© Terry Lillybridge



photo by John Gamon