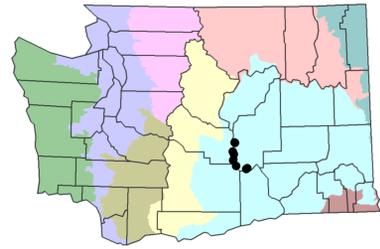


Eatonella nivea (D.C. Eaton) A. Gray
white eatonella
Asteraceae - aster family
status: State Threatened, BLM strategic
rank: G4G5 / S1



General Description: Densely tomentose annual, 1-4 cm, branching from the base and often forming small tufts. Leaves basal and alternate, numerous, densely crowded, linear-oblong to spatulate, entire, up to 1.5 cm long but generally shorter.

Floral Characteristics: Heads radiate, terminal, sessile and partially concealed by the leaves, or on slender axillary peduncles 1-4 cm long. Involucre bell-shaped, about 5 mm high; bracts 8-12 in 1 series, linear-oblong, reflexed in fruit. Ray flowers scarcely exceeding the disk, 1.5-2.5 mm, pale yellow or sometimes drying to purplish. Disk flowers many, corolla 2 mm, yellow. Flowers May to July; in WA it is often senescent by early June.

Fruits: Flattened achenes, about 3 mm, black, shiny, and hairless, except for long white marginal hairs; pappus of 2 fringed, shortly awn-tipped scales.

Identification Tips: Not likely to be confused with any other taxon within the WA portion of its range. There is only one species in the genus *Eatonella*.

Range: Great Basin of ID, southeast OR, western NV, CA, and WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Shrub steppe vegetation on poorly developed soils in dry, sandy, or volcanic desert areas. WA plants are in fine pea-sized gravel that is deep red and derived from basalt. Sites are sparsely vegetated, usually with no apparent cryptogam layer and shrub cover values of 5-20%. Associated species include sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), purple sage (*Salvia dorii*), cushion cryptantha (*Cryptantha circumscissa*), threadleaf phacelia (*Phacelia linearis*), smoothstem blazingstar (*Mentzelia laevicaulis*), snow buckwheat (*Eriogonum niveum*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). Elevations in WA: 150-400 m (490-1300 ft). *E. nivea* is an ephemeral annual that probably flowers in response to warming temperatures and available spring moisture. Thus, the number of flowering individuals and the number of flowers produced fluctuates widely from year to year. In some years it may not appear at all.

Comments: Easily overlooked both because of its diminutive size and short-lived nature.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 21; Hickman 1993.

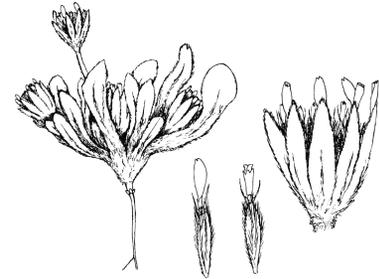


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