

Meconella oregana Nutt.

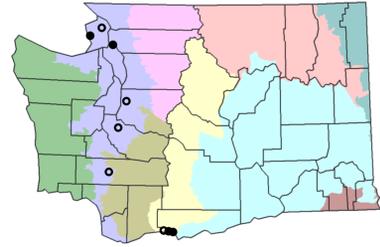
white meconella

Papaveraceae - poppy family

status: State Endangered, Federal Species of Concern,

BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G2G3 / S1



General Description: Slender annual, 2-16 cm tall, hairless, whitish waxy; stem sparingly branched or simple. Basal leaves entire, spatulalike to obovate, 3-18 mm long, rosette-forming. Stem leaves entire, opposite; petiole up to 10 mm long.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers solitary on slender terminal and axillary peduncles 2-8 cm long. Sepals 3 (2), distinct, about 1.5 mm long; petals 6 (4-5), white, 1-5 x 1-3 mm. Stamens 4-6; anthers oval, much shorter than the filaments. Blooms late March to early April, depending on temperature and available moisture.

Fruits: Capsules linear, up to 25 mm long, often somewhat contorted, dehiscent lengthwise from above.

Identification Tips: *M. oregana* is the only member of its genus occurring in WA. It can be distinguished from other Papaveraceae by the combination of its entire, opposite stem leaves, distinct sepals (not fused and forced off by expanding petals), usually 4-6 stamens, small white flowers, and linear capsules that dehisce by longitudinal valves.

Range: Vancouver Island, B.C., the lowlands west of the Cascades in WA, the Columbia River Gorge in both WA and OR, the Willamette Valley in OR, and south to CA.

Habitat/Ecology: Primarily in open grassland; sometimes within a mosaic of forest and grassland on gradual to almost 100% slopes. Habitats are wet to moist in spring, but dry by early summer. Associated species include ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*), blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), woodland-star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*), wholeleaf saxifrage (*Saxifraga integrifolia*), Leiberg's bluegrass (*Poa leibergii*) and Douglas's blue-eyed grass (*Olsynium douglasii*). Elevations in WA: 20-200 m (60-620 ft). Historically, fire probably maintained this species' habitat by reducing tree and shrub invasion and competition from grasses and forbs.

Comments: This small annual is easy to overlook, and it flowers for a very short period each year. Threats include competition from weedy annuals and soil compaction from recreational use of some sites. This taxon is rare throughout its range.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 3; Jolley 1988; Pojar & MacKinnon 1994.

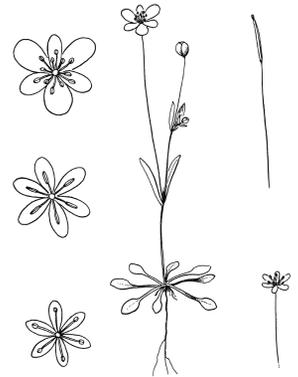


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