

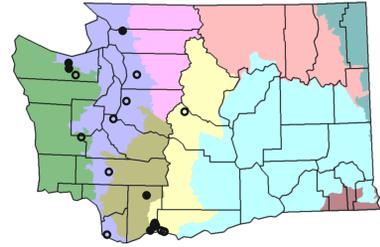
## ***Montia diffusa*** (Nutt.) Greene

branching montia

Portulacaceae - purslane family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G4 / S2S3



**General Description:** Low, spreading, succulent, branched annual, 0.5-2 dm tall, generally twice as broad as tall. Basal leaves few, rosette-forming, blades lanceolate to nearly circular in outline, abruptly narrowed to an elongate petiole; stem leaves 3 or more, alternate, lanceolate to diamond-shaped, without clasping sheaths, the lower with blades 2-7 x 1-4 cm.

**Floral Characteristics:** Racemes axillary, clustered toward the branch ends. Sepals 2, persistent, unequal, 2-3 mm long. Petals 5, white to pale pink, 3-5 mm long. Ovules 3, stamens 5. Flowers April to July.

**Fruits:** Capsules 3-valved; seeds black, papillate, with a short conical appendage.

**Identification Tips:** This species does not have rhizomes, stolons, or bulbs. It is distinguished by its annual habit, low-growing, branched appearance, 3 or more alternate stem leaves that are 1-4 cm wide and not clasping at the base, 5 white to pink petals, 3 ovules, and 5 stamens. *Montia parvifolia* is a perennial with larger petals (7-15 mm long). *Montia howellii*, *M. dichotoma*, and *M. linearis* have narrow, linear, or nearly linear leaves not more than 4 mm broad.

**Range:** Mainly west of the Cascades from southern B.C. to Marin Co., CA.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Moist forests and open fir woodlands in the lowland and lower montane zones; occasionally in xeric soil or disturbed sites. Associated species include Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), ocean-spray (*Holodiscus discolor*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), and miner's-lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*). This species tolerates some degree of disturbance, including fire or logging activity. Elevations in WA: 260-880 m (850-2900 ft).

**Comments:** Timber harvest, grazing, trampling, agriculture, competition with nonnative plants, hydrologic alteration, and suburban and rural development threaten this species. It is also rare in B.C.

**References:** Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 4.

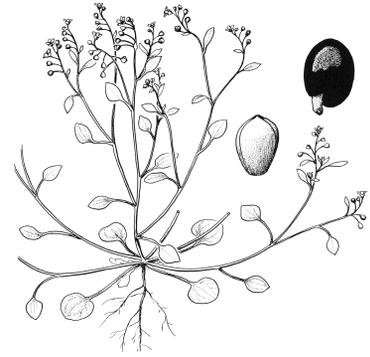


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