

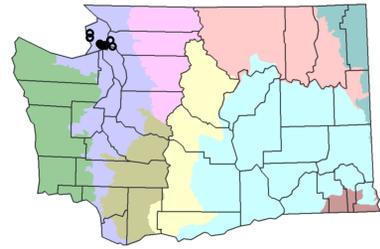
Ranunculus californicus* Benth. var. *californicus

California buttercup

Ranunculaceae - buttercup family

status: State Threatened, BLM sensitive

rank: G5 / S1



General Description: Sparsely to copiously hairy perennial with slender, fibrous, hairy roots. Stems several, spreading or lying close to the ground but not nodally rooting, somewhat hollow, freely branched, 20-60 cm. Leaves basal, with petioles up to 12 cm long; blades 2-4 cm long and deeply trilobed into wedge-shaped, lobed, or toothed segments. Stem leaves alternate, reduced upward to bracts with linear lobes.

Floral Characteristics: Pedicels up to 15 cm long. Sepals hairy, greenish or reddish-tinged, 6-8 mm long, spreading, but the upper half partially to sharply reflexed. Petals 8-16 (sometimes more), yellow, oblong or narrowly oblanceolate, 8-15 mm long, and about 1/3 as broad. Nectary scale broadly fan-shaped, about 0.7 mm long, hairless, with lateral margins free for at least half of their length.

Fruits: Heads globose or hemispheric, up to 3 mm long in fruit, hairless. Achenes 15-40, broadly obovate in outline, 2-2.5 mm long, strongly compressed (scarcely 1/3 as thick as broad), smooth, hairless or rarely somewhat hairy, with distinct, slightly keeled margins. Styler beak flattened, fairly stout at the base, 0.5-1 mm long, recurved at the tip. Identifiable May to June.

Identification Tips: *R. californicus* is similar to *R. acris* and *R. occidentalis*. However, *R. acris* has erect stems and only 5 petals. *R. occidentalis* usually has only 5-6 petals, and achenes 2.6-3.6 (4.8) mm long. *R. californicus* and *R. occidentalis* hybridize where they co-occur.

Range: Southern Vancouver Island, B.C., to southern CA.

Habitat/Ecology: Coastal bluffs, open grasslands, rocky slopes along the shore, and rocky wooded areas. Usually in dry grassland areas, but also found in moister sites. Elevations in WA: 3-15 m (10-50 ft). Associated species include Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), Sitka brome (*Bromus sitchensis*), Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*), pink plectritis (*Plectritis congesta*), camas (*Camassia* spp.), and checker lily (*Fritillaria affinis*).

Comments: Known from several historical sites and fewer than 5 recent sites. This taxon is also rare in Canada.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 3.

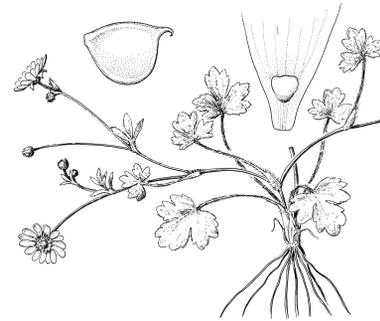


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