

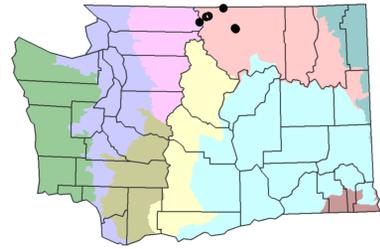
***Saxifraga cernua* L.**

nodding saxifrage

Saxifragaceae - saxifrage family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S1S2



General Description: Glandular and hairy grayish perennial with 2 to several densely hairy flowering stalks (8) 10-15 (20) cm tall. Basal leaves several, with slender petioles, bearing reddish purple ricelike bulblets in the axils; blades kidney-shaped, (5) 10-15 (20) mm broad, with 5-7 (9) prominent rounded teeth or lobes. Stem leaves several, alternate, reduced, and few-lobed to entire.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers rarely greater than 10, in a false raceme or panicle, the lowermost 1-2 (sometimes all) replaced by small reddish purple bulblets. Calyx broadly bell-shaped, 3-4.5 mm long when flowering, purplish, with 5 erect, persistent lobes. Petals white, with 3 nerves that are often purplish near the base, up to 12 mm long, 2-5 times as long as the calyx lobes. Stamens 10, longer than the calyx lobes. Ovary about 1/4 inferior when flowering, less so at maturity. Flowers July to August.

Fruits: Capsules, rarely developing.

Identification Tips: The presence of bulblets in both the basal and stem leaf axils and in place of at least the lower flowers differentiates this species from other *Saxifraga*. The common name refers to the flowering stem nodding from the weight of a developing fruit.

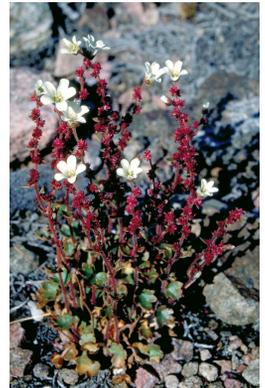
Range: Circumboreal: throughout most of Canada to AK, south in the Rocky Mts. to NM. Peripheral in WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Seepage areas, moist rock crevices, ledges of steep cliffs, glacial outwash, and streambanks. In WA, *S. cernua* is found in alpine habitats of the northern Cascade Mts.; elevations range from 2000-2500 m (6500-8120 ft). Associated species include mosses, lichens, spiked woodrush (*Luzula spicata*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), alpine bluegrass (*Poa alpina*), and low-growing alpine cushion plants. The species tolerates most environmental conditions, occurring in almost all habitats, from wet to very dry and from sheltered to exposed. It grows especially well in snow patches, as it is highly resistant to frost.

Comments: *S. cernua* is known from the Okanogan National Forest. Because the species' habitat is difficult to access, threats are presumed minimal. It is possibly extirpated from Ontario, and rare in ID, UT, NM, MN, NH, and Manitoba.



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