

Sclerolinon digynum (A. Gray) C.M. Rogers

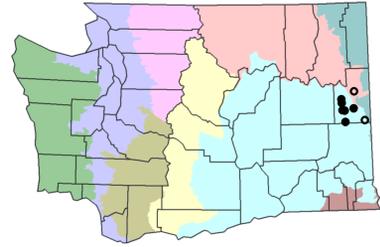
synonym: *Linum digynum* A. Gray

northwestern yellowflax

Linaceae - flax family

status: State Threatened, BLM strategic

rank: G5 / S1S2



General Description: Slender hairless annual with an erect, somewhat branched stem 5-40 cm tall. Lower leaves opposite, 0.5-3 cm long, sessile, oblong, 1-nerved, margins entire. Upper leaves minutely toothed to glandular.

Floral Characteristics: Pedicels about equaling the flowers, but less than 3 mm long. Sepals 5, unequal, 2-3 mm long, margins gland-toothed. Petals 5, pale yellow, 3-4 mm long. Like all members of the family, the petals are ephemeral and easily detached. Styles 2; stigmas wider than the styles. Stamens 5. Flowers June to late July in WA.

Fruits: 4 rough-surfaced nutlets; seeds about 1 mm, somewhat mucilaginous when wet.

Identification Tips: *S. digynum* is the only member of its genus. Within its family, it is the only species with yellow flowers, opposite lower leaves, toothed upper leaves, and 2 styles.

Range: WA, OR, CA, and ID.

Habitat/Ecology: Vernal pool margins, receding lakeshores, meadows, and seasonally wet gravelly to rocky soils; often in areas of thin soil above basalt bedrock. In eastern WA, it occurs in grasslands and biscuit-swale topography (*biscuit scablands*). Elevations in WA: 300-740 m (1000-2500 ft). Associated species include annual hairgrass (*Deschampsia danthonioides*), hairy owl-clover (*Castilleja tenuis*), needleleaf navarretia (*Navarretia intertexta* ssp. *propinqua*), camas (*Camassia quamash*), thyme-leaf broomspurge (*Euphorbia serpyllifolia*), close-flowered knotweed (*Polygonum polygaloides* ssp. *polygaloides*), Pacific foxtail (*Alopecurus saccatus*), trefoil (*Lotus purshiana*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), grassy tarweed (*Madia gracilis*), California oatgrass (*Danthonia californica*), bluegrasses (*Poa* spp.), and mosses. It can grow in slightly disturbed areas, but not in areas dominated by reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and spreading bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*). Like many annuals, it may not germinate in dry years.



photo by Joe Arnett

Comments: Threats include cattle grazing, off-road vehicles, and loss of habitat from invasive nonnative plants.

References: Hickman 1993.



photo by Joe Arnett