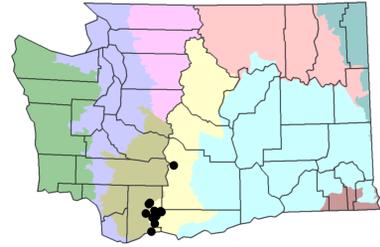


Sisyrinchium sarmentosum Suksd. ex Greene

pale blue-eyed grass

Iridaceae - iris family

status: State Threatened, Federal Species of Concern,
BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive
rank: G2 / S1S2



General Description: Adapted from Flora of North America (1993+):
Tufted perennial herb up to 32 cm tall. Stems unbranched, 1.7-2.8 mm wide, hairless, compressed, 2-winged; margins entire and similar to stem body. Leaves hairless, narrow, elongate but generally shorter than the stem, overlapping and sheathing at the base.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescence solitary and terminal; flowers 2-7 on slender pedicels. Sheathing bracts 2, green, hairless, keels smooth. Outer bract 27-48 mm, 14-17 mm longer than the inner bract, margins basally fused for 3-5 mm. Inner bracts with translucent margins up to 0.5 mm wide. Tepals 6, pale blue with yellow bases; outer tepals 10-14 mm, with tips rounded and awned. Filaments fused; anthers yellow.

Fruits: Tan to medium brown capsules, globe-shaped, 4-5 mm. Seeds 1-1.5 mm, minutely wrinkled. Flowers and fruits mid-June to mid-August.

Identification Tips: This species is not in Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973), but would mistakenly key to *S. angustifolium*, which grows only in the eastern U.S. *S. septentrionale* is the only other member of the genus with pale blue tepals in our area; it has shorter outer tepals (8-9.1 mm), and outer bracts 17-42 mm longer than the inner bract. The length/width ratio of the outer tepals is 2.6-3.0 for *S. sarmentosum*, but greater than 3.0 for *S. septentrionale*.

Range: Narrow endemic from the Columbia River Gorge in WA and Clackamas Co., OR. Specimens from Yakima Co., WA are questionable.

Habitat/Ecology: Seasonally moist grass/sedge meadows and small openings from 100 to 1700 m (365-5700 ft). Meadows are relatively flat to concave and usually hold moisture during winter and spring. Conifers and shrubs such as lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), and spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*) border the meadows and are sometimes invasive.

Comments: This species has a limited range and is also rare in OR. Ongoing threats include competition from woody and nonnative plants, livestock and elk grazing and trampling, and agricultural practices. Cattle grazing decreases seed production and recruitment of new individuals.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 26; Henderson 1976.



photo by Joe Arnett



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