

## ***Sidalcea virgata*** Howell

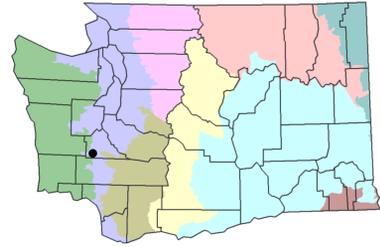
synonym: *Sidalcea malviflora* (DC.) A. Gray ex Benth. ssp. *virgata* (Howell) C.L. Hitchc.

rose checker-mallow

Malvaceae - mallow family

status: State Endangered, Federal Species of Concern,  
BLM strategic

rank: G5TNR / S1



**General Description:** Rhizomatous perennial herb from a strong taproot, usually with trailing, freely rooting branches. Stems 2-10 dm tall; hairy with soft, long, branched hairs at the base, becoming smaller and star-shaped above. Leaves 2-8 cm broad, hairy on both surfaces, basal blades kidney-shaped and very shallowly lobed, stem blades with (5) 7-9 deeply cut, toothed to rounded lobes.

**Floral Characteristics:** Racemes elongate, open; pedicels 3-8 mm long. Calyx 6-12 mm long, uniformly covered with fine star-shaped hairs; lobes tapered evenly to the tip. Petals 5, pale to deep pinkish rose to purple, often with lighter veins, notched at the tip, 15-30 mm long. Blooms May to June.

**Fruits:** Carpels 3-4 mm long, deeply pitted on the sides, sparsely glandular to hairy on the back; beak about 0.5 mm long.

**Identification Tips:** *Sidalcea virgata* can be distinguished from other rhizomatous checker-mallows west of the Cascades by its star-shaped stem hairs, densely hairy calyces that taper broadly to the base, and rounded but notched petals. Additionally, its lowest flowers are consistently in the axils of well-developed leaves.

**Range:** OR and WA.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Open meadows, prairies, grassy hillsides, fencerows, roadsides, and in low mountain areas. The single population in WA is in open prairie; associated species include snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus* var. *laevigatus*), Roemer's fescue (*Festuca roemeri*), early blue violet (*Viola adunca*), broadpetal strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana* var. *platypetala*), sweet vernalgrass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), slender cinquefoil (*Potentilla gracilis*), western buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*), and goldenrod (*Solidago simplex* var. *simplex*). In OR it grows in rolling uplands, wetland prairies, wetlands, and deciduous and evergreen forests. Habitats have been historically maintained by fire.

**Comments:** Endangered in WA due to the extremely small size of the solitary known occurrence. Conifer and nonnative shrub encroachment are a continual threat, particularly Scot's broom (*Cytisus scoparius*).



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
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