

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

CUSCUTA PLATTENSIS
WYOMING DODDER
Family: Cuscutaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G1?Q State: S1

WYNDD Plant List: Regional endemic

Very High Wyoming Significance

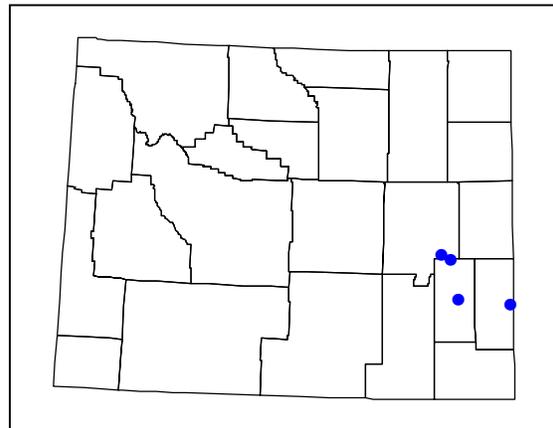
Description: Wyoming dodder is a rootless, twining, parasitic herb, which is known to attach to *Grindelia*, *Solidago*, and *Helianthus*. The stems are yellowish-green, moderately slender, and climb the full length of the stems of the host. The smooth flowers may be in either loose or dense clusters, and have short pedicels. The sepal lobes are rounded at the tip and are slightly longer than 1 mm. The corolla is persistent at the base of the capsule and has short, egg-shaped lobes that are about 1 mm long. The tube of the corolla is about 2 mm long, with fringed appendages inside. The stigmas are capitate, and the styles are not joined, but are slightly unequal, and a little more than 1 mm long. The capsule is almost spherical and about 5 mm in diameter when mature. The seeds are kidney-shaped. (Dorn 2001, Nelson 1899)

Similar Species: *Cuscuta approximata* and *C. epithymum* have stigmas that are long and narrow, not capitate. *C. occidentalis* lacks appendages inside the corolla and the corolla lobes are sharply pointed. *C. megalocarpa* has capsules that are somewhat beaked. *C. indecora* has capsules that are thickened around the base of the styles and flowers that have tiny bumps. (Dorn 2001)

Flowering/Fruiting Period: August-September

Distribution: Regional or state endemic, depending on the taxonomy followed. In Wyoming, known only from the SE Plains and Platte River Canyon in Converse, Goshen, and Platte Counties. Of these, only the Goshen County site is known to be extant. Reports from the Black Hills and Bighorn Mountains in Weston and Johnson counties appear to be based on misidentifications.

Habitat: Found on sand prairie hills parasitizing *Psoralea* and *Ambrosia* at elevations of 4200-4900 feet.



Wyoming distribution of *Cuscuta plattensis*

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from a single extant occurrence (observed in 1993) and 3 historical records (1896-1906). Two other reports may be based on misidentified specimens.

Abundance: Not known.

Trends: No trend data are available, but the lack of observations suggests this species may be in decline, or simply restricted to private farmlands that have not been recently surveyed.

Protection status: No occurrences are known from special management areas.

Threats: May be threatened by agricultural practices, especially herbicide treatments.

Managed Areas: May occur at Glendo State Park (an historical site) and on lands managed by the Casper BLM (Platte River RA).

References:

Dorn, R.D. 1992. Vascular Plants of Wyoming, second edition. Mountain West Publishing, Cheyenne, WY.

Neighbours, M. and H. Marriott. 1991. Candidate sensitive plant species, Platte River Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management. Prepared for the BLM by the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, Laramie, WY.

Nelson, A. 1899. New plants from Wyoming VI. Bulletin of Torrey Botanical Club 26: 122-134.

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