

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

OONOPSIS WARDII
WARD'S GOLDENWEED
ASTERACEAE

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G2 State: S2

WYNDD Plant List: State endemic

(Watch list; Medium conservation priority)

Description: Ward's goldenweed is a multi-branched perennial herb with a woody caudex and leafy stems up to 40 cm tall. Leaves are alternate, lance-shaped to oblong, 2-10 cm long, 4-7 mm wide, glabrous, and smooth-margined. The flat-topped to slightly rounded inflorescence is composed of 3-12 rayless heads borne among the terminal leaves. The involucre of each head is 12-20 mm long and contains 15-25 yellow disk flowers. Fruits are glabrous achenes with capillary bristles (Hall 1928; Clark and Dorn 1979; Dorn 1992).

Synonyms: *Haplopappus wardii*.

Similar Species: *Haplopappus multicaulis* has yellow ray flowers, shorter stems, and leaves less than 5 mm wide. In vegetative condition *Xylorhiza glabriuscula* can be distinguished by its narrower, gray-green leaves and ragged involucre margins. Species of *Chrysothamnus* differ in having numerous small heads, elongate involucre, and narrower leaves.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Flowers and fruits from late July to late September.

Distribution: State endemic restricted to the Laramie and Shirley Basins of Wyoming and



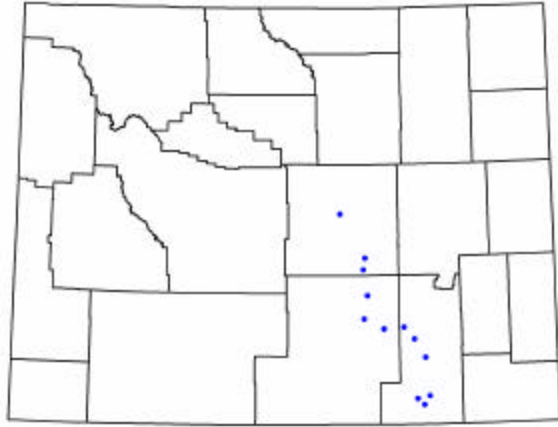
Above: *Oonopsis wardii* by Walter Fertig.

the Casper Arch region in Albany, Carbon, and Natrona counties, Wyoming.

Habitat: Typically found on selenium-rich shale-clay slopes, barren plains, and disturbed roadsides at elevations of 5460-7200 feet. Usually in areas with low vegetative cover (20-50%) and little competition from other plants. Found in communities dominated by Gardner's saltbush, bluebunch wheatgrass and contracted Indian ricegrass or Birdfoot sagebrush and Gardner's saltbush. Often found along disturbed roadsides where selenium-rich soils are exposed and competing vegetation has been removed. The species appears to be tolerant of a fair amount of disturbance, but does not compete well in stands with high vegetative cover. The species may also be limited by the availability of seleniferous soils.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from about 12 occurrences in Wyoming, 9 of that have been discovered or relocated since 1977.

Abundance: Populations may be locally numerous, although often restricted to suitable pockets of microhabitat. Largest



Wyoming distribution of *Oonopsis wardii*.

known colony (at the base of the Shirley Mountains) contains at least 20,000 individuals.

Trends: Populations appear to be stable to possibly even increasing due to expansion along graded roadsides where the plant appears to have a competitive advantage.

Protection status: All known populations occur on public, state, or private lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: Threats low, possibly only threat is herbicide spraying in roadside areas.

Managed Areas: Known occurrences are found on lands managed by the BLM Casper and Rawlins Field Offices.

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