PEDIOMELUM DIGITATUM
PALM-LEAVED SCURF PEA
Family: Fabaceae

Status:
US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.
Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:
Global: G5  State: S1
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral
Medium Wyoming Significance

Description: Palm-leaved scurf pea is a perennial herb with a thick, woody base and erect, branched stems 3-8 (up to 10) dm tall. Leaves are palmately compound, mostly with 5 narrow leaflets 2-7 cm long and 2-8 mm wide, which are glandular dotted on the upper surface, and densely silky-hairy below. The pea-flowers are in whorls of 3-7 (up to 11), on long (10-18 cm) stalks emanating from the leaf axils. The calyx is densely hairy, and consists of a tubular portion 2.5-3.2 mm long, terminated by 5 very uneven lobes. Corolla is bluish to purple (rarely white), fading to brown. The fruit is a legume 7-8 mm long enclosed in the enlarged calyx (Great Plains Flora Association 1986, Dorn 2001).

Synonyms: Psoralea digitata

Similar Species: Pediomelum esculentum lacks glands, has densely hairy stems, and leaflets that are broadly elliptic to ovate. P. argophyllum has densely silvery-hairy stems. P. hypogeum has short (less than 5 cm), densely-flowered stems. Lupinus species have flowers individually inserted on the stems, rather than in whorls (Dorn 2001).

Flowering/Fruiting Period: May - July.

Distribution: South Dakota south to Texas, west to Colorado and Wyoming (Great Plains Flora Association 1986). In Wyoming known only from the eastern plains near the Nebraska state line in Goshen County.

Habitat: Reported from sandy prairies, gravelly hillsides, sand dunes, sandy open wooded hillsides, and stream valleys across its range (Great Plains Flora Association 1986). In Wyoming, this species occurs in sand hills at 4200 feet.


Abundance: Population size not known, but total occupied area is quite small (less than 40 acres of known habitat in Wyoming).

Trends: Not known.

Protection status: No occurrences are found on lands receiving special protection or management.

Threats: Threats not known.

Managed Areas: Found partially on lands managed by the BLM Casper District and on adjacent private lands.
References:


Author: Stuart Markow and Walter Fertig
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