

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

PHACELIA ALBA
WHITE SCORPION-WEED
Family: Hydrophyllaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G4G5 State: S1

WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral

(Low conservation priority)

Description: White scorpion-weed is an annual herb with simple to multi-branched, leafy stems 5-70 cm tall. Stems are pubescent with a mix of numerous short, soft, spreading hairs (these sometimes glandular) and scattered long, hairs. The leaves are irregularly lobed to twice-pinnate, 2-10 cm long, 2-8 cm wide, and are often hairy. Basal leaves are petioled while the upper stem leaves are short-stalked or nearly sessile. The multi-branched, glandular inflorescence consists of numerous coiled cymes 1-2 cm long in flower and up to 8 cm long in fruit. Flowers have a bell-shaped, white (rarely pale bluish) corolla 3-4 mm long and broad with ragged-toothed, rounded margins and stamens exerted beyond the corolla by 2-4 mm. Fruits are glandular, ovoid capsules 3-3.3 mm long. Seeds are brown or black, pitted throughout, and deeply grooved on both sides of the prominent ventral ridge (Atwood 1975; Dorn 1992; Cronquist et al. 1984; Welsh et al. 1993).

Synonyms: *P. neomexicana* var. *alba*.

Similar Species: *Phacelia glandulosa* and *P. franklinii* have blue to purple flowers with



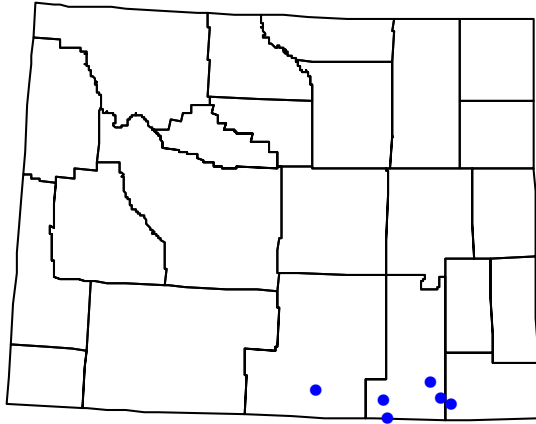
Above: *Phacelia neomexicana* var. *alba* by Walter Fertig.

entire-margined corolla lobes. *P. sericea* is a perennial herb with purple flowers. *P. denticulata* has stamens that are shorter than or equal to the corolla lobes (Dorn 1992).

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Late May-September.

Distribution: Southeast Wyoming south to New Mexico and Chihuahua, Mexico, west to eastern Arizona and eastern Utah. In Wyoming, known only from the southern Laramie Range and Laramie Basin in Albany and Laramie counties.

Habitat: Rangelike, this species occurs in dry, open places in montane foothills, meadows, and aspen, spruce or pine forests at mid-elevations, often on clay-loam, gravelly, or sandy soils (Atwood 1975; Cronquist et al. 1984). In Wyoming, most populations are found on rocky soils in montane *Artemisia tripartita* grasslands or gravelly roadsides at 7000-8000 feet.



Wyoming distribution of *Phacelia alba*.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 6 occurrences in Wyoming, only 3 of which have been located since 1977 (most recently in 1998).

Abundance: Census data lacking for most populations. 113 plants observed by W. Fertig in one roadside population in 1998, and 150-300 plants estimated at another site in the southern Laramie Range in 1996. Other populations are reported as "occasional" to "common".

Trends: Not known.

Protection status: One occurrence may be within a TNC easement (confirmation needed). One other population is found in Curt Gowdy State Park. Other occurrences are on public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: May be impacted by competition from exotic plants in many semi-disturbed habitats.

Managed Areas: Occurs on Medicine Bow National Forest, the BLM Rawlins Field Office, and Curt Gowdy State Park.

References:

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