

PHYSARIA CONDENSATA

TUFTED TWINPOD
(BRASSICACEAE)

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: Formerly a USFWS Category 2 candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

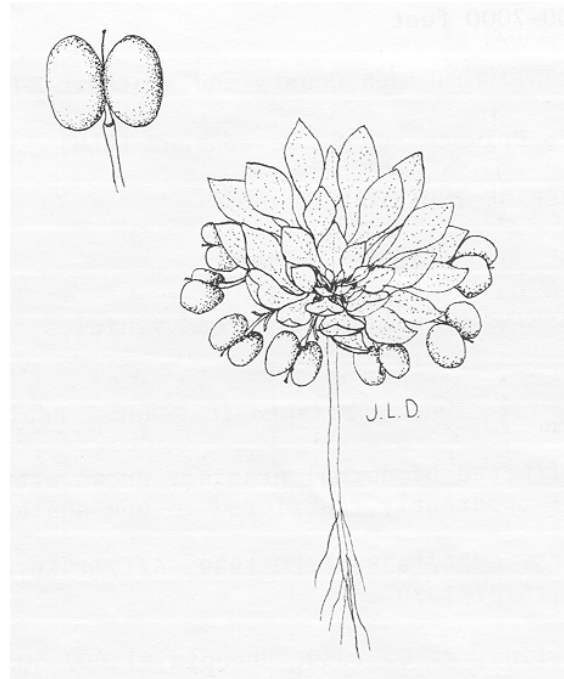
Global: G2 State: S2

WYNDD Plant List: State endemic
(High Conservation Priority)

Description: Tufted twinpod is a prostrate, rosette-forming perennial forb with ascending stems to 8 cm high. The silvery-pubescent basal leaves are obovate, acute-tipped, entire, and 0.5-1.5 cm long x 4-8 mm wide. Stem leaves are smaller and reduced upwards. The inflorescence is a compact, few-flowered raceme of bright yellow, 4-petaled flowers 4-7 mm long. Fruits are inflated, deeply 2-lobed pods 0.5-1 cm wide and have appressed to spreading silvery hairs. The membranous partition (replum) between each half of the fruit is oblong to obovate, 3-4 mm long, and usually bears 4 stubby seed-bearing stalks (funiculi). Seeds are flat and lack a membranous margin (Rollins 1939, 1993; Dorn and Dorn 1980; Fertig et al. 1994).

Identification Comments: Flattened basal rosette of small leaves, inflated 2-lobed fruit pods under 1 cm wide, oblong replums with 4 funiculi, and bright yellow flowers are diagnostic.

Similar Species: *Physaria eburniflora* has whitish or pale flowers and spreading hairs on the fruit. *P. dornii* has mature fruits over 1.5 mm wide, longer leaves, and a more erect basal



Physaria condensata by Jane Dorn. From Dorn & Dorn 1980.

rosette. *P. didymocarpa* has erect stems and leaves that are often toothed. *P. acutifolia* has more erect stems and a narrowly linear replum with only 2 funiculi per face.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: May-July.

Distribution: Narrow endemic of the southern Overthrust Belt and lower Green River Basin in southwest Wyoming (Lincoln, Sublette, and Uinta counties).

Habitat: Occurs on dry, rocky calcareous knolls and ridges, clay banks, and shaley hills in sparsely vegetated cushion plant communities in openings within sagebrush grassland at 6700-7400 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Reported from 16 occurrences, 13 of which have been discovered or relocated since 1982 (most recently in 2000).

Abundance: Whiskey Basin Consultants (1982) estimated the state population at 21,200 plants in 6 large occurrences in 1982. The total state population probably numbers 40,000-

60,000 at present, based on sampling by W. Fertig in 1997.

Trends: Apparently stable.

Protection status: 2 occurrences are protected within Fossil Butte National Monument, and one population is within the Kemmerer Cushion Plant No Surface Occupancy Area. All other known populations are on state or public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: Threats apparently minimal at present. Development associated with mineral exploration may be a potential short term threat, although the species may be adaptable to disturbed sites.

Managed Areas: Found on lands managed by Fossil Butte NM and the BLM Kemmerer, Pinedale, and Rock Springs Field Offices.

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