

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

POLYGALA VERTICILLATA
WHORLED MILKWORT
Family: Polygalaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.

Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G5 State: S1

WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low conservation priority)

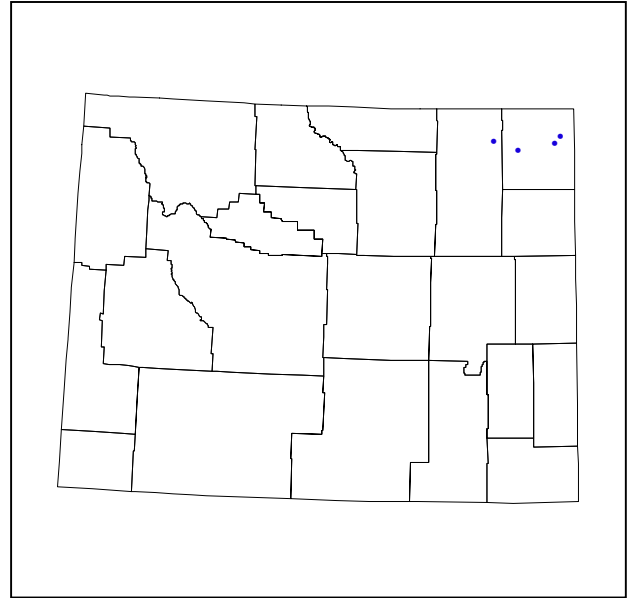
Description: Whorled milkwort is an annual forb with glabrous stems 5-35 cm tall. Leaves are whorled at the middle of the stem, linear to linear-elliptic, and 1-2 cm long x 1-3 mm wide. The inflorescence is a cylindrical spike 5-25 mm long that is tapered at the apex. Flowers are white or greenish-pink and irregular. The calyx consists of 3 green outer sepals and 2 petal-like wings with obovate to oval blades 1.6-2 mm long and shorter than the fruit. Petals 3, lowermost "keel" petal 1.2-1.4 mm long with a fringe of 3-4 claw-like lobes. Fruiting capsules 1.8-2.4 mm long (Gillett 1968; Great Plains Flora Association 1986).

Similar Species: *Polygala alba* is a perennial with oval wing sepals at least 3 mm long that equal or exceed the fruit. *P. senega* is a perennial with pubescent stems and leaves mostly over 3 mm wide (Gillett 1968; Dorn 1992).

Flowering/Fruiting Period: May-October.

Distribution: Occurs from New England to Manitoba, south to Florida, Texas, and Utah. In Wyoming, this species is known from the northern Great Plains and Black Hills in Campbell and Crook counties and an historical report from Yellowstone National Park.

Habitat: Rangelike, this species is reported from dry prairies, open woodlands, and sand dunes (Great Plains Flora Association 1986). In Wyoming, it is found on dry grassy ridgetops, grassy draws, sagebrush grasslands, and open Ponderosa pine woodlands at 3800-4500 feet.



Wyoming distribution of *Polygala verticillata*.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 4 extant and 1 vague historical record in Wyoming. The extant populations have all been discovered since 1981 (most recently in 1991).

Abundance: Not known.

Trends: Not known.

Protection status: One historical population is protected in Yellowstone National Park.

Threats: Not known.

Managed Areas: Occurs on lands managed by Thunder Basin National Grassland and the BLM Newcastle Field Office. May also occur on Black Hills NF and Yellowstone NP.

References:

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

Gillett, J.M. 1968. The milkworts of Canada. Canada Department of Agriculture Monograph No. 5.

Gleason, H.A. and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.

Great Plains Flora Association. 1986. Flora of the Great Plains. Univ. Kansas Press, Lawrence, KS.

Holmgren, N. 1998. Illustrated Companion to Gleason and Cronquist's Manual - Illustrations of the Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx NY.

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Updated: 01-04-06