

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

SPHAEROMERIA SIMPLEX
LARAMIE FALSE SAGEBRUSH
Family: Asteraceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.
(Formerly a C2 candidate for listing under
the Endangered Species Act.)
Agency Status: USFS Region-2 Sensitive.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G2 State: S2
WYNDD Plant List: State endemic (High
conservation priority)

Description: Laramie false sagebrush is a
mat-forming perennial herb or subshrub less
than 10 cm tall. The silvery-hairy linear
leaves are crowded at the base of the stem
and are entire or 2-3 toothed at the tip.
Flowering stems have 2-3 small, linear leaves
and a single, terminal flower head of
numerous, yellow disk flowers (ray flowers
are absent). The involucre is composed of two
sets of green bracts with membranous
margins. No pappus is present on the ribbed
achenes (Fertig et al. 1994).

Synonyms: *Tanacetum simplex*

Similar Species: *Sphaeromeria capitata* has a
single, head-like terminal inflorescence
composed of 2 or more separate, sessile
flower heads (recognizable by the presence of
more than one involucre). *S. argentea* has
several distinct, short-stalked heads in a loose
inflorescence. Herbaceous and low shrubby
species of *Artemisia* have numerous
flowering heads arranged in spikes, racemes,
or panicles. Vegetative and rayless specimens
of *Hymenoxys acaulis* differ in having tufts of



Above: *Sphaeromeria simplex* from Laramie Quarry
Site (Albany Co.) by Cherie Winner.
Below: *S. simplex* by Jane Dorn.



white hairs at the base of the sessile, entire
basal leaves.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Flowers/fruits from May to August.

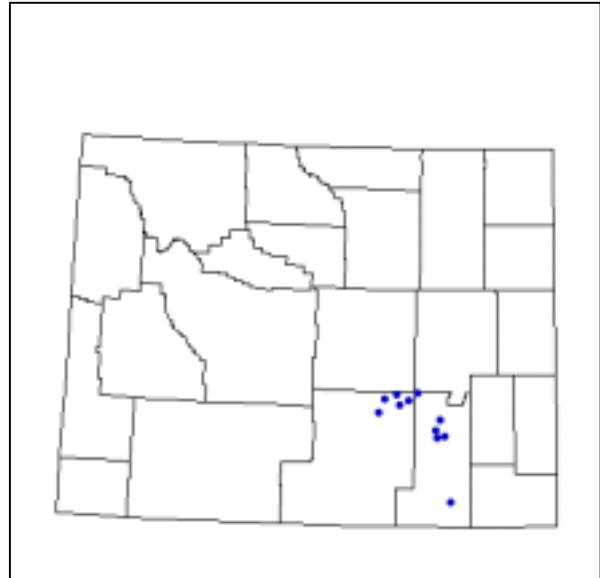
Distribution: Endemic to southeast Wyoming in the western foothills of the Laramie Range, Shirley Basin, and Shirley Mountains (Albany, Carbon, Converse, and Natrona counties).

Habitat: Occurs primarily on gentle slopes or rims of dry, rocky limestone-sandstone “pebble plains” in wind-scoured openings dominated by cushion plant communities within more densely vegetated juniper, limber pine, big sagebrush, or mountain mahogany stands. Occasional high elevation populations occur on thin-soiled outcrops of limestone bedrock associated with redbeds in cushion plant/*Artemisia tripartita* var. *rupicola* communities. Elevation ranges from 7200-8760 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 11 occurrences in Wyoming, all of which have been observed or discovered since 1996 (6 new sites were discovered in 1997).



Above: *Sphaeromeria simplex* habitat near Laramie Quarry Site by Cherie Winner.



Distribution of *Sphaeromeria simplex* in Wyoming.

Abundance: Sampling by Dorn in 1996 at sites in the northern Laramie Range and Shirley Mountains suggests a total population of ca 860,000 individuals (Mountain West Environmental Services 1996). With the discovery of 6 additional populations in 1997, this figure is probably closer to over 1 million.

Trends: Laramie population has declined due to some habitat loss. Trends elsewhere are unknown, but probably stable.

Protection status: TNC has an easement on 20 acres at the Laramie limestone quarry site. Other sites are mostly on BLM lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: One population near Laramie is located on the edge of an active limestone quarry. Some BLM populations are along roadside areas that are potentially impacted by compaction from vehicles, new road and trail development, and competition from exotic plants. Herbivory has not been observed on this species.

Managed Areas: Known from lands managed by the BLM Rawlins District and the state of Wyoming.

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