

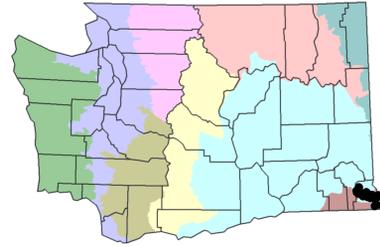
Astragalus arthurii M.E. Jones

Arthur's milk-vetch

Fabaceae - pea family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G4 / S2



General Description: Greenish, minutely hairy perennial from a stout taproot and branched crown; stems numerous, ascending or erect, 2-4 dm long. Leaves pinnate with an odd number of leaflets, 7-12 cm long. Leaflets 17-29, upper surface hairless, oblong-elliptic, 6-12 (14) x 2-4 mm, but those of the upper leaves reduced. Stipules lanceolate, 2-4 mm long, not fused.

Floral Characteristics: Flowering stalks about equal to twice the length of the subtending leaves. Racemes with 5-20 flowers. Pedicels 2-5 mm long; flowers white, spreading or drooping, 10-12 mm long. Calyx 5-7 mm long, the oblong-triangular teeth about half the length of the tube. Banner erect, wings about 1 mm longer than the rounded keel. Flowering mid-April through early July.

Fruits: Pods spreading to reflexed, with minute appressed hairs, on a stalk about twice the length of the calyx, the body 3.5-5 cm x 3-4 mm, compressed, triangular to heart-shaped in cross section, the lower suture deeply grooved and intruded. Mostly in fruit by July.

Identification Tips: Most easily identified with mature fruits. To determine if the stipules are fused, look at the very lowest stipule on the stem. The extremely long (about 10 times longer than wide), slender, linear-fusiform pods are the most distinctive feature of this species.

Range: Endemic to the extreme southeast corner of WA, northeast Wallowa Co., OR, and Nez Perce and Idaho cos., ID.

Habitat/Ecology: Dry grassy hills and rocky meadows. Associated with buckwheat (*Eriogonum heracleoides*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa sandbergii*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), and threadleaf phacelia (*Phacelia linearis*). Elevations in WA: 245-1200 m (800-3900 ft). Often occurs within bluebunch wheatgrass-Idaho fescue (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*-*Festuca idahoensis*) habitats, which generally lack shrubs and have lower cover of perennial herbaceous species. Fires and livestock grazing increase the cover of weedy annuals.

Comments: The main range of this species does not exceed 31 km (50 mi.) in diameter. Some occurrences are in horse and cattle grazing areas. Some sites are adjacent to agricultural fields, where herbicide use could be a threat.

References: Daubenmire 1970.



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