

Astragalus diaphanus Dougl. ex Hook.
transparent milk-vetch
Fabaceae (Pea Family)

Status: State Possibly Extirpated
Rank: G3G4SX

General Description: Prostrate annual or biennial from a stout taproot; stems numerous, 4-16 inches long; leaves $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch long; stipules tiny, $\frac{1}{16}$ inch long, not attached; leaflets 9-13, obovate, $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, usually glabrous on the upper surface; racemes compactly 5 to 20 flowered; peduncles equaling or shorter than the leaves; flowers $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long, white but the banner pinkish- or purplish-veined and the keel more or less purplish-tipped; calyx $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch long, often purplish, the teeth linear, somewhat shorter than the tube; pods sessile, linear-oblong in outline, strongly arcuate, membranous, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long, $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick.

Identification Tips: It is easily recognized by its diffuse growth-habit, its short and broad, rather distant, usually red-margined leaflets, and its tiny, whitish, lavender-striate flowers.

Phenology: Identifiable from April through June.

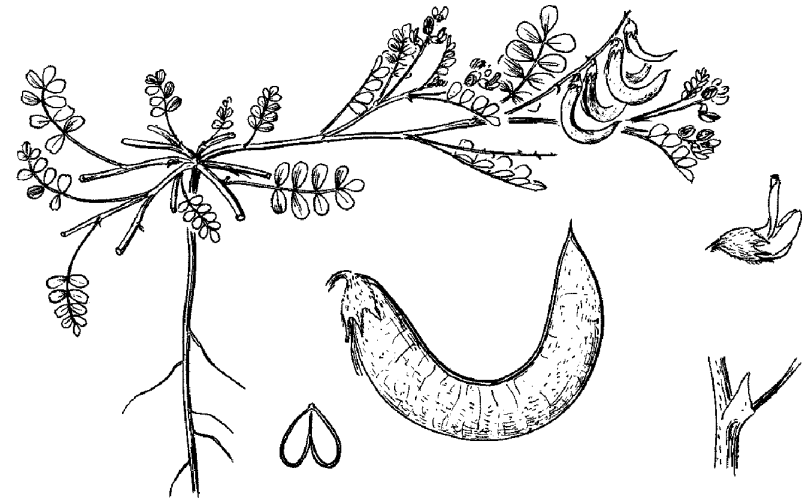
Range: The John Day River valley from near Dayville, Grant County, OR downstream to the Columbia River, then west along the Columbia to The Dalles in Wasco County, OR and on the north bank near Bingen in Klickitat County, WA (Columbia Basin physiographic province).

Habitat: Occurs in sandy or gravelly soils on gravel bars, alluvial slopes, and overlying basaltic rocks. Elevation: 150 to 4000 feet.

Ecology: This is a nitrogen-fixing species which occurs on substrates suspected of being low in nitrogen. Apparently the species responds well to disturbances to the seedbed such as animal trails and rill erosion (Croft et al. 1997).

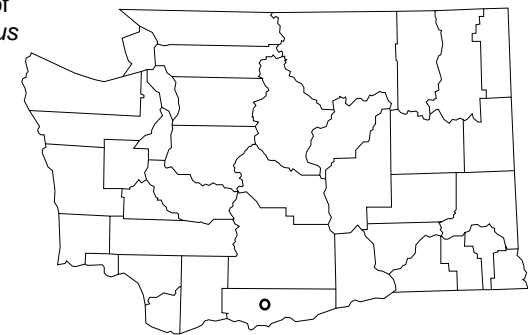
State Status Comments: This taxon's occurrence in WA is represented only by a historic collection from Klickitat County. There are no known extant sites in WA.

Astragalus diaphanus
transparent milk-vetch



©1961 University of Washington Press. Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish.

Known distribution of
Astragalus diaphanus
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

Astragalus diaphanus

transparent milk-vetch



Astragalus diaphanus

transparent milk-vetch

Inventory Needs: A systematic inventory from John Day Dam to Bingen along the Columbia River in Klickitat County is needed.

Threats and Management Concerns: Potential excavation of sites for road maintenance and construction material represents a threat to this species. Fire suppression and ORV use also are potential threats.

References:

Croft, L.K., W.R. Owen and J.S. Shelly. 1997. Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project Analysis of Vascular Plants.

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1961. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 3: Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 614 pp.