

Delphinium viridescens Leiberg

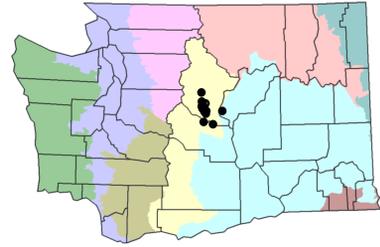
Wenatchee larkspur

Ranunculaceae - buttercup family

status: State Threatened, Federal Species of Concern,

BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G2 / S2



General Description: Stout perennial, (6) 8-12 dm tall, with a short, heavy rootstock. Stems usually several, hollow, smooth below, conspicuously yellowish glandular-hairy above. Lower leaves up to 10 cm broad, long-petioled, divided into 3 (5) main lobes, which are further dissected. Upper leaves with short petioles, nearly erect, overlapping, linear, entire or linearly lobed.

Floral Characteristics: Racemes narrow, the pedicels much shorter than the flowers. Sepals 5, brownish purple, prominently streaked with greenish yellow or yellow, or sometimes entirely pale greenish yellow, oblanceolate, glandular-hairy, 7-11 mm long. Upper sepals form a thick, straight spur 7-10 mm long. Petals 4, yellowish to purple, the lower pair densely hairy, about equal to the sepals. Flowers midsummer (July).

Fruits: Follicles 6-8 mm long, erect, densely glandular-hairy; seeds chocolate-colored, 2 mm long. Fruits begin dispersal by late September.

Identification Tips: Several tall *Delphinium* species occur in the Wenatchee Mts. *D. viridescens* is distinguished by its dense yellowish glandular hairs on the upper stem and flowers, and iridescent brownish purple to greenish yellow sepals. *D. multiplex* has bluish purple sepals, usually with a greenish white midstripe, and a generally shorter stature (4.5-10 dm tall).

Range: Endemic to the Wenatchee Mts., from near Leavenworth, Chelan Co., southward to the Liberty area of Kittitas Co.

Habitat/Ecology: Moist meadows, seasonally wet openings in aspen groves and hardwood thickets, moist microsites in open coniferous forests, springs, seeps, and riparian areas. Elevations: 380-1740 m (1240-5700 ft). All sites have surface water or saturated upper soil profiles into early summer. Soils are silt loams or clay loams. Fire may have played a role in creating, enlarging, and maintaining habitat openings. Larger sites were probably maintained by a relatively high water table.

Comments: The species is confined to a small range and very specific habitat conditions. Rural development and resulting hydrologic changes represent a major threat; timber harvesting and grazing pose localized threats for some populations.

References: Croft et al. 1997.

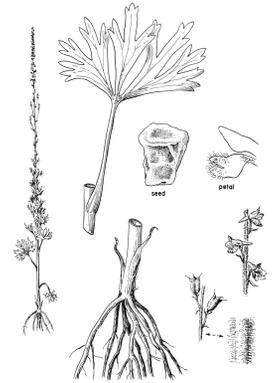


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