

## *Githopsis specularioides* Nutt.

common blue-cup  
Campanulaceae (Harebell Family)

**Status:** State Sensitive

**Rank:** G5S3

**General Description:** Annual herb with branched or unbranched stems up to 12 inches tall. In Washington it has usually been observed to be less than 6 inches tall. The plants are leafy stemmed, and the narrow, toothed, alternate leaves are sessile, up to 2/3 of an inch long and 1/16 of an inch wide. Flowers occur singly, and are irregularly scattered on the upper stems, or are strictly terminal on small, unbranched plants. Flowers are deep blue, with a whitish throat, 3/8 of an inch long or less. Flowers have five lobes, and the lobes are about as long as the flower tube. The sepals, being 1/4 to 1/2 inch long, tend to obscure the flowers from view.

**Identification Tips:** This is the only species of *Githopsis* in WA. It is a small annual of dry, open habitats, and can be difficult to detect unless present in large numbers. It is distinguished by the more or less erect, blue, 5-lobed, tubular-campanulate (bell-shaped) flowers; inferior ovary; three-lobed stigma; and filaments and anthers distinct, rather than united in a tube. The long calyx lobes enveloping the flower are distinctive. The fruiting capsules are additionally diagnostic; they open only at the apex, within the calyx, rather than laterally and outside the calyx.

**Phenology:** Plants have been reported flowering as early as mid-April and as late as mid-June. As an annual, the species apparently flowers when moisture, light and temperature conditions are right, which varies from year to year and from geographic region to region.

**Range:** Southeastern Vancouver Island, B.C. and Lake Chelan, WA, south to Monterey and Kern counties, CA. In WA, it is known from Chelan, Klickitat, Lewis and Thurston counties, and historically from Pierce and Whitman counties. Occurs in the Columbia Basin, Eastern Cascades, Western Cascades, and Puget Trough physiographic provinces.

**Habitat:** Open places at lower elevations, such as thin soils over bedrock outcrops, talus slopes, and gravelly prairies. Sites are typically open habitats within an otherwise forested landscape, or

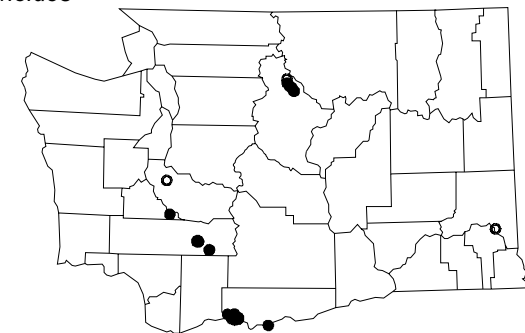
## *Githopsis specularioides*

common blue-cup



©1959 University of Washington Press. Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish.

Known distribution of  
*Githopsis specularioides*  
in Washington



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

***Githopsis specularioides***  
common blue-cup



***Githopsis specularioides***  
common blue-cup

**Habitat** (continued): in the transition zone between forested and non-forested regions. Associated species vary greatly but often include Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Oregon oak (*Quercus garryana*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*), soft brome (*Bromus mollis*), desert parsley (*Lomatium* sp.), small-flowered blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*), heterocodon (*Heterocodon rariflorum*), rosy plectritis (*Plectritis congesta*), and death camas (*Zigadenus venenosus*). Elevations 200 to 2500 feet.

**Ecology:** The taxon survives best on relatively bare soil, where taller competing vegetation is absent or sparse. Excessive shading may eliminate the taxon. The microsites are seasonally moist.

**State Status Comments:** The species is generally found in small populations consisting of scattered individuals. The number of populations is relatively low. However, they are scattered over a fairly large area of the state. The likelihood of more populations being discovered is quite high.

**Inventory Needs:** Appropriate habitats throughout its range in WA should be inventoried.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Residential development, recreational development, and quarrying are activities which could destroy habitat for the species. The taxon does persist in habitats that are known to have been grazed in the past. However, to the extent that grazing leads to an increase in annual weedy species, such as cheatgrass, that compete with the species, it represents a potential threat.

**References:**

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1959. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 4: Ericaceae though Campanulaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 510 pp.

