

Ranunculus triternatus A. Gray

synonym: *Ranunculus reconditus* A. Nelson & J.F. Macbr.,
Ranunculus glaberrimus Hook. var. *reconditus* (A. Nelson &
J.F. Macbr.) L.D. Benson

obscure buttercup

Ranunculaceae - buttercup family

status: State Endangered, Federal Species of Concern,
BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive - rank: G2 / S1

General Description: Showy, yellow-flowered perennial with cylindrical roots 2-3 mm thick; stems prostrate or ascending, 5-20 cm, hairless. Basal leaves persistent, dissected into 3 distinct leaflets and further dissected 2-3 more times; ultimate segments linear. Stem leaves similar.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers terminal on the tallest stems. Sepals 4-8 x 2-5 mm. Petals 5, 6-15 x 4-10 mm. Nectary scale hairless, forming a pocket. Plants begin flowering early to mid-March.

Fruits: Mature achenes 1.8-2.2 x 1.2-1.8 mm, moderately compressed, finely hairy, but not bristly, spiny, or papillate. Styler beak straight, with a fine, sharp point, 0.8-1.5 mm. Mature fruits begin dispersing by mid-April.

Identification Tips: *R. triternatus* does not co-occur with *R. glaberrimus*, although both taxa occur in Klickitat and Wasco counties. *R. triternatus* is distinguished by its leaves, which are dissected 3-4 times; the leaves of *R. glaberrimus* are shallowly lobed.

Range: NV, ID, in the vicinity of the Columbia Hills in WA, and Mill Creek Ridge, OR.

Habitat/Ecology: Meadow steppe habitat dominated by bunchgrasses and forbs. Mostly found on north-facing upper slopes and crests of basalt ridges overlain by loess deposits of varying depth. Associated species include yellow bells (*Fritillaria pudica*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum* ssp.), prairie lupine (*Lupinus lepidus*), balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), and bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*). Elevations in WA: 580-1220 m (1900-4000 ft). This species flowers very early in the year. The fire return interval of its habitat is estimated to be 30-90 years.

Comments: In WA this species is restricted to the Columbia Hills in Klickitat County. Portions of its historic range have been degraded by livestock grazing and agriculture. Other threats include invasive weeds and hot fires. This taxon is also rare in OR and NV.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 3.

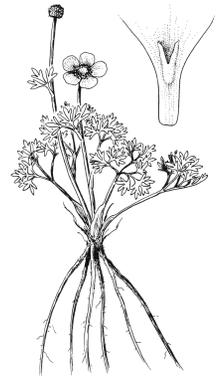
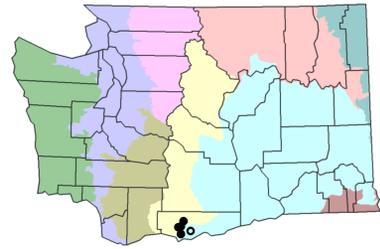


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