

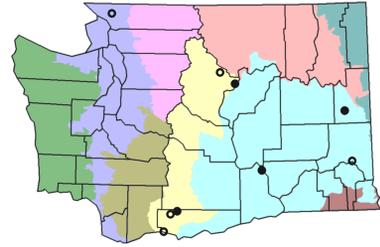
Rotala ramosior (L.) Koehne

lowland toothcup

Lythraceae - loosestrife family

status: State Threatened, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S1



General Description: A small, hairless annual with simple or branched, erect to prostrate stems up to 15 cm tall. Stems angled. Leaves opposite, 1.5-3 cm long, blades lanceolate to oblanceolate, tapering gradually to a short petiole.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers inconspicuous, usually 1 (2-3) per axil, sessile. Calyx with sepals united, forming a bell-shaped, shallowly 4-lobed hypanthium, 1.5-2.5 mm, becoming spherical and 3-4 mm in fruit. Petals white, about 1 mm long. Stamens and style not exerted. Flowers June to August.

Fruits: Capsules spherical, 4-celled, about 3 mm long, opening along the septa.

Identification Tips: *Rotala ramosior* is distinguished from *Ammannia robusta* by its white flowers, which are usually solitary in the leaf axils, and its petioled leaves. In contrast, *Ammannia* has pale lavender flowers occurring in clusters of up to 5 per axil, and sessile leaves with clasping bases.

Range: B.C. and Ontario, Canada; WA to CA, and most of the central and eastern U.S.; Mexico; the West Indies.

Habitat/Ecology: Damp areas in fine sand and silt, wet swampy places, mudflats, lake and pond margins, and along free-flowing river reaches. Found in riparian wetlands growing below high water, often in a community of small emergent annuals. Associated species include narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*), grand redstem (*Ammannia robusta*), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), needle spike-rush (*Eleocharis acicularis*), southern mudwort (*Limosella acaulis*), yellowseed false pimpinell (*Lindernia dubia*), tapertip flatsedge (*Cyperus acuminatus*). Elevations in WA: 60-690 m (200-2260 ft).

Comments: In WA, much of this species' habitat and some historical populations have been submerged by large hydroelectric dams. Currently, most populations occur along the remaining free-flowing reaches of the Columbia River and its tributaries; it is also known from lake shorelines in the channeled scablands. This species is vulnerable to upstream and downstream hydrologic development. It is also rare in Canada, OR, MT, CO, AZ, NE, MN, IA, MI, and the northeastern states. We also have an unconfirmed report from a prairie remnant in Thurston County.



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photo by Joe Arnett