

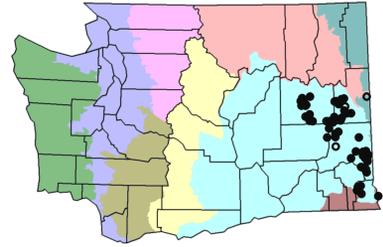
Silene spaldingii S. Watson

Spalding's silene

Caryophyllaceae - pink family

status: State Threatened, Federal Listed Threatened

rank: G2 / S2



General Description: Herbaceous perennial, 2-6 dm tall, typically with 1 stem, but sometimes several. Foliage and stem light green, densely covered with soft, sticky hairs. Leaves opposite, 4-7 pairs per stem, sessile, slightly fused at the base, oblanceolate below to lanceolate above, 6-7 x 0.5-1.5 cm.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers several, in a leafy, compact cyme. Calyx tubular to bell-shaped, about 15 mm long when flowering, 10-nerved. Corolla creamy white. Petals 5, each with a long narrow claw about 15 mm long, and a very short, ovate blade at the summit of the claw, about 2 mm long, entire or shallowly notched. There are 4 (5-6) short appendages inside the corolla at the junction of the claw and blade.

Fruits: 1-celled capsules, with a hairless ovary stalk. Seeds light brown, about 2 mm long, wrinkled, inflated. Flowers mid-July through September; most have young fruits by late August.

Identification Tips: This species is extremely glandular, often covered with wind-blown debris. Foliage is an unusual pale green which contrasts with the surrounding vegetation. *S. douglasii* may occur with *S. spaldingii* but is rarely glandular, has narrower stems and leaves, hairy ovary stalks, and stems that tend to be decumbent. *S. scouleri* is also densely glandular, similar in coloration to *S. spaldingii*, and may grow in association with it; its leaves are markedly reduced upward on the stem, the blades of its petals are 4-8 mm long and have only two appendages, and the stalk of the ovary is hairy.

Range: Southern B.C., eastern WA, northeast OR, ID, and western MT.

Habitat/Ecology: Open native grasslands with a minor shrub component; occasionally with scattered conifers. Most common in sites dominated by Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) with a sparse cover of snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), or with sagebrush (*Artemisia* ssp.). Also occurs in mosaics of grassland and ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forest, and on drier sites, with bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), lupines (*Lupinus* ssp.), and arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*) most often on north slopes. Elevations in WA: 470-1160 m (1550-3800 ft).

Comments: This species is rare throughout its range. Populations are small and fragmented, raising concern about their long-term viability. Much of the species' suitable habitat has been lost.

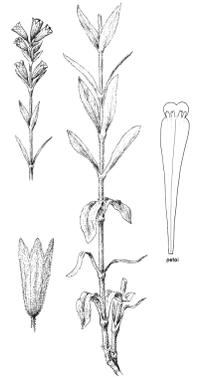


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