

Symphyotrichum boreale (Torr. & A. Gray) Á. Löve
& D. Löve

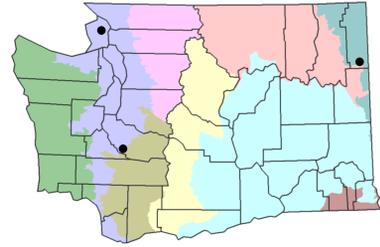
synonym: *Aster junciformis* Rydb., *Aster borealis* (Torr. &
A. Gray) Prov.

rush aster

Asteraceae - aster family

status: State Threatened, BLM strategic

rank: G5 / S1



General Description: Adapted from Douglas *et al.* (1998-2002):

Perennial herb from a slender rhizome, seldom over 2 mm thick. Stems erect, simple or branched above, hairless below, becoming hairy above, 15-80 cm tall. Basal leaves reduced and soon deciduous. Stem leaves linear, alternate, unstalked with rounded, slightly clasping bases, hairless, 2-7 cm x 2-9 mm, becoming reduced above; margins smooth or inconspicuous toothed.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescence short and broad, sometimes more elongate; flower heads radiate, solitary (in reduced plants) to many, relatively small. Involucre (4) 5-7 (8) mm tall, the bracts in 4-5 overlapping series, oblong, abruptly sharp-pointed, hairless, often with purplish tips or margins, the outer more or less shorter than the inner. Ray flowers 20-50, white or rarely pale bluish, (7) 10-15 (20) mm in length. Disk flowers yellow. Flowers July to September.

Fruits: Several-nerved, hairy achenes with a white pappus.

Identification Tips: Distinguished by its slender rhizomes less than 2 mm thick, leaves less than 1 cm wide, and habitat of cold bogs and lake margins. *Symphyotrichum subspicatum** has wider, toothed leaves.

Range: AK, Canada, south to NJ, WV, IL, NE, CO, ID, and WA.

Habitat/Ecology: Lakesides, marshes, bogs, and fens, including calcareous bogs and fens, open peatland, and sedge-dominated open sphagnum bogs. Occurs from lowlands to subalpine zones; WA elevations are from 80 to 750 m (250-2500 ft). Associated species include western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), several sedges (*Carex* spp.), sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* spp.), bluejoint (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), bulrush (*Schoenoplectus acutus*), Douglas aster (*Symphyotrichum subspicatum**), and small white violet (*Viola macloskeyi*). One WA population grows on the lakeward edge of a Labrador tea-spirea (*Ledum groenlandicum*-*Spiraea douglasii*) community.

Comments: Threats include herbicides and altered hydrology due to timber harvest, road building, and development. This species is rare in several other states and parts of Canada.

References: Douglas *et al.* 1998-2002, vol. 1; Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 20.



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