

Synthyris pinnatifida* S. Watts. var. *lanuginosa (Piper)
Cronq.
cut leaf synthyris
Scrophulariaceae (Figwort family)

Status: State Threatened
Rank: G4T2S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1959): This perennial herb is 2 to 8 in. (5-20 cm) tall. The plant is grayish-frosty light green, and downy or fuzzy throughout except for the almost smooth sepals. This silvery green color is very pronounced on the young tender leaves. The basal leaves are 1 ½ in. (3.8 cm) long by almost half as wide, pinnately dissected, and borne on leaf stalks at least as long as the blades. The leaves on the stem are bract-like and mostly entire. The inflorescence is a densely clustered raceme on a stem that is usually taller than the foliage. The individual spike-like flowers are generally blue but occasionally whitish, pink, or lavender. The corolla is up to ¼ in. (4-7 mm) long and fused to form a tube, with the lobes almost equal or a little shorter than the tube. The capsules are nearly as wide as high and not notched.

Identification Tips: Hitchcock recognizes three varieties of *Synthyris pinnatifida* that are almost indistinguishable from each other: variety *canescens*, variety *pinnatifida*, and variety *lanuginosa*. However, neither variety *canescens* nor *pinnatifida* are known from Washington. *S. pinnatifida* is quite distinct among the Washington species of *Synthyris*. Within its range it is most similar to *S. schizantha*. *S. pinnatifida* is 2 to 8 in. (5-20 cm) tall while *S. schizantha* is 4-12 in. (10-30 cm) tall. The leaves of *S. pinnatifida* are pinnately dissected while the leaves of *S. schizantha* are shallowly lobed. The corolla lobes of *S. pinnatifida* are not incised, while the corolla lobes of *S. schizantha* are, and the capsules of *S. pinnatifida* are nearly as wide as high and not notched, while the capsules of *S. schizantha* are nearly or fully twice as wide as high, and strongly notched.

Phenology: Individuals flower primarily from May through June and have been recorded to begin flowering as early as March and as late as August.

Range: This endemic taxon is found only within on the Olympic Peninsula in Clallam and Jefferson counties.

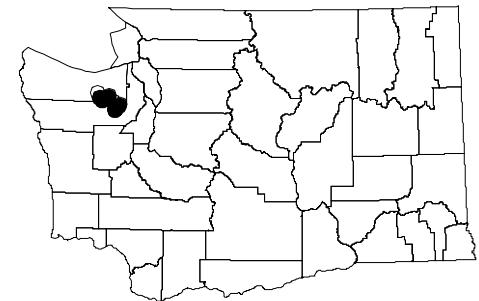
Habitat: The taxon occurs in dry rocky places and has been reported in elevations ranging from 5500 to 9300 feet (1675-1920 meters), with a greater abundance over 6000 feet (1829 meters). Species found growing with it include pale agoseris (*Agoseris glauca*), spreading phlox (*Phlox diffusa*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), cutleaf daisy (*Erigeron compositus*), alpine smelowskia (*Smelowskia calycina*)

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Known distribution
of *Synthyris pinnatifida* var.
lanuginosa
in Washington



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

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beautiful sandwort (*Arenaria rubella*), shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*), Pacific lupine (*Lupinus lepidus*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and sedges (*Carex* spp.).

Ecology: The taxon is found in a typical cushion plant community of densely packed plants that produce a flat looking surface.

State Status Comments: There are less than twenty occurrences of this endemic taxon in Jefferson and Clallam counties.

Inventory Needs: Documented sites should be revisited and their status assessed.

Threats and Management Concerns: The main threat to the populations is disturbance from hikers, deer and goats.

References:

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

Kennison, J.A. and R.J. Taylor. 1979. Report on *Synthyris pinnatifida* var. *lanuginosa*. Unpublished. On file with WNHP.

Wiley, Leonard. 1969. *Rare Wildflowers of North America*. Published by the author, Portland, OR. On file with WNHP.