



Cut-leaf Microseris
Microseris laciniata
Cut-leaf Silverpuff

Blooming from May through July, Cut-leaf Microseris can be found by looking for upright stems topped with a single deep-yellow flower. These flowers can look similar to dandelions, with many layered petals with slightly toothed ends. The leaves are symmetrically lobed and usually grow from the base of the plant.

Cut-leaf microseris can be found west of coastal mountain ranges all the way from Washington State to California. A key factor in the wide distribution of this plant is the diversity of habitats in which it thrives. It can be found on dry, sunny slopes and in damp valley meadows, in clay soils with very little water drainage and in rocky, high drainage areas.

While plentiful, cut-leaf microseris was not a main food source for many tribes. A milky juice can be found in the hollow stems of the plant, which if left in sunlight for long enough, will thicken and firm. Despite the well-known bitter taste of the milky, sun-baked juice, some children would use it as chewing gum. The roots may have also been used as a source of food on occasion, although the specifics are not widely documented.

This plant is helpful for native wetland restoration because it is non-invasive and has a high seed production. It can also play an important role in diversifying habitats because of the long span of time it spends in bloom. For up to three months in late spring and early summer, it provides pollen to a host of pollinators, particularly butterflies.

Sources:

<http://naeb.brit.org/uses/22985/>

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<https://denix.osd.mil/nr/focus-areas/habitat/habitat-restoration/reports/strategy-for-the-cooperative-recovery-of-rare-species-affecting-training-ranges-native-seed-production-strategy-a-key-piece-of-south-puget-sound-prairie-conservation-november-2011-legacy-09-213/>