

# ***Astragalus pulsiferae* A. Gray var. *suksdorfii***

(Howell) Barneby

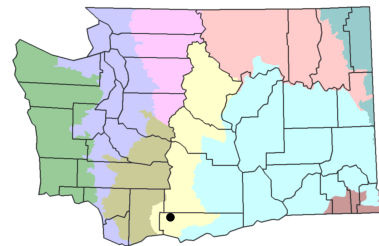
Ames' milk-vetch

Fabaceae - pea family

status: State Endangered, Federal Species of Concern,

BLM strategic

rank: G4T2 / S1



**General Description:** Grayish hairy, prostrate, taprooted perennial with several slender stems arising from a branched root crown at or just below ground level. Individual stems 5-20 cm long. Leaves pinnate, 1.5-4 cm long; leaflets 7-15, linear-oblongate to obovate, 3-10 mm long. Stipules 1-3 mm long, ovate, not fused.

**Floral Characteristics:** Racemes with 4-10 flowers, much shorter than the leaves. Flowers small, 5-7 mm long, white to cream with purple, banner erect, keel 3.4-5.3 mm long. Calyx hairy, about 1/2 as long as the corolla; teeth linear-lanceolate, 1.4-2.1 mm long. Flowers mid-May to early July.

**Fruits:** Pods sessile, inflated, membranous, nearly round in cross section, 1-celled, 1-1.5 cm long, unevenly ellipsoid, with long soft hairs. Fruits may appear as early as mid-June.

**Identification Tips:** Most easily identified with mature fruits. To determine if the stipules are fused, look at the very lowest stipule on the stem.

**Range:** Northern CA, NV, and disjunct in southcentral WA.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Open ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forests with bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), on generally flat or very gentle terrain in coarse-textured substrates. Elevations in WA: 565-600 m (1850-1980 ft). Occurs in forests which are subject to periodic fires, but the plant's microsites are not densely vegetated, so fires may be low intensity at ground level. Like many other rare members of the genus, it occurs on disturbed ground, such as on dirt roads, yet its range remains very narrow.

**Comments:** In WA this taxon is limited to an area of less than 5 km<sup>2</sup> (less than 2 mi.<sup>2</sup>). The population consists of approximately 1000 individuals, with various size classes well represented. Individuals appear to reproduce successfully, yet seemingly suitable habitat remains unoccupied. The most significant threat is fire suppression, which has led to increasing tree and shrub cover and a buildup of the herbaceous and litter layers. This taxon is rare throughout its range.

**References:** Barneby 1964.

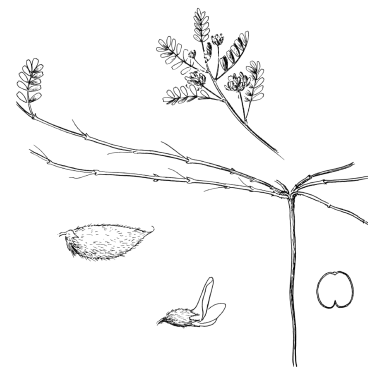


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