

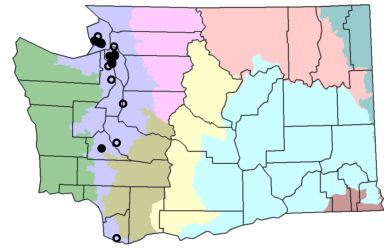
Castilleja levisecta Greenm.

golden paintbrush

Orobanchaceae - broomrape family

status: State Endangered, Federal Listed Threatened

rank: G1 / S1



General Description: Perennial herb 1-5 dm tall, with soft, somewhat sticky hairs. Stems several, unbranched, erect to spreading or creeping at the base, giving the appearance of being several plants, especially in tall grass. Leaves alternate with soft to firm sticky hairs. Lower leaves linear-lanceolate, entire; upper ones broader, with mostly 1-3 pairs of short lateral lobes on the upper third. Showy bracts bright golden yellow, soft-hairy and sticky, about the same width as the upper leaves, usually with 1-3 pairs of short lateral lobes near the tip.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers mostly hidden by bracts, borne in upright terminal spikes. Calyx 15-18 mm long, deeply cleft above and below, primary lobes deeply divided into 2 linear segments, blunt or rounded at the apex. Corolla tubular, narrow, 20-23 mm long, bilobed, the upper lip slender, hairy, about 3-4 times the length of the unpouched lower lip. Flowers April to July.

Fruits: Many-seeded capsules, persisting on the plant beyond the growing season.

Identification Tips: Not likely to be confused with any other *Castilleja* species in the Puget Trough, with the exception of an occasional yellow-flowered form of *C. hispida*.

Range: Historically west of the Cascade Mts. from southern Vancouver Island, B.C. to the Willamette Valley in OR. Currently known from WA and 2 small islands adjacent to Vancouver Island.

Habitat/Ecology: Open grasslands in the Puget Trough lowlands, generally on glacial outwash or depositional material. It does not tolerate a closed canopy. Common associates include Roemer's fescue (*Festuca roemerii*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Scot's broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), and other invasive species. Elevations in WA: 3-90 m (10-300 ft). Historically, fire played a key role in the maintenance of its open prairie habitats and may enhance plant vigor and seedling recruitment.

Comments: Rare regional endemic now extirpated from many of its historic localities. It is also rare in B.C. and possibly extirpated from OR. *C. levisecta* is one of our most endangered species, threatened by competing vegetation, herbivory, and human population pressures. All extant sites need ongoing protection and habitat management efforts.

References: Douglas & Ryan 1999; Pojar & MacKinnon 1994.

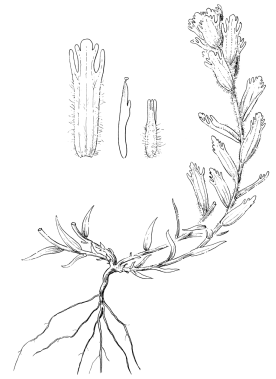


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