

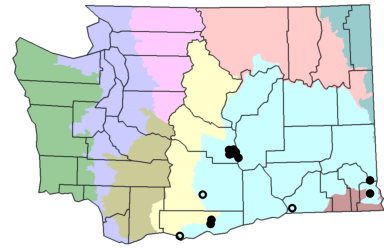
# *Cryptantha rostellata* (Greene) Greene

beaked cryptantha

Boraginaceae - borage family

status: State Threatened

rank: G4 / S2



**General Description:** Slender annual, 1-4 dm tall, stem single or branched, herbage with straight, stiff, appressed hairs. Leaves linear, scattered, lower several pairs opposite.

**Floral Characteristics:** Spikes naked, often in twos or in threes. Calyx somewhat spreading and 3-4 mm long at maturity, closely enveloping the nutlet, swollen only near the base, beset with stout, spreading, hooked or arching bristles. Corolla 1-2.5 mm wide. Flowers late April to mid-May; identifiable through mid-June.

**Fruits:** Nutlet solitary, up to 3 mm long, smooth, lanceolate, distinctly compressed, often with distinctly angular margins, broadly truncate at the base, the scar evidently expanded below into an open areola. Style reaching or commonly shortly surpassing the middle of the nutlet.

**Identification Tips:** *Cryptantha flaccida* is a very similar annual, also producing a single nutlet. However, *C. flaccida*'s nutlet is smaller (up to 2 mm long), only slightly if at all compressed, and somewhat pointed or very narrowly truncate at the base. The nutlet scar is closed or nearly so, not forming an areola. The fruiting calyces are appressed to the stem, unlike those of *C. rostellata*, which are somewhat spreading at maturity. The calyx hairs of *C. flaccida* appear downswept away from the base, while those of *C. rostellata* tend to be broadly spreading.

**Range:** Kittitas Co., WA, south to central CA.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Usually in scattered patches of a few individuals along dry, open drainages. The sites are kept open by the harshness of the environment and slight erosion. Substrates are generally coarse. Elevations in WA: 180-880 m (600-2900 ft). Associated species include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), stiff sagebrush (*Artemisia rigida*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), wax currant (*Ribes cereum*), purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), scullcap (*Scutellaria angustifolia*), large-flowered collomia (*Collomia grandiflora*), winged cryptantha (*Cryptantha pterocarya*), bristly combseed (*Pectocarya setosa*), threadleaf phacelia (*Phacelia linearis*), Gray's biscuitroot (*Lomatium grayi*), Carey's balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza careyana*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), and bulbous bluegrass (*Poa bulbosa*). The number of individuals present probably fluctuates yearly in response to weather and seed production.

**Comments:**

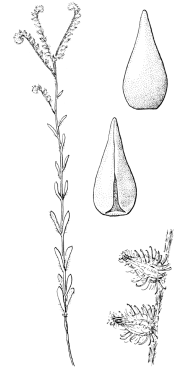
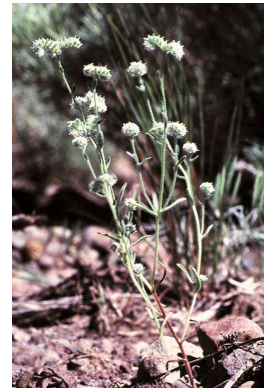
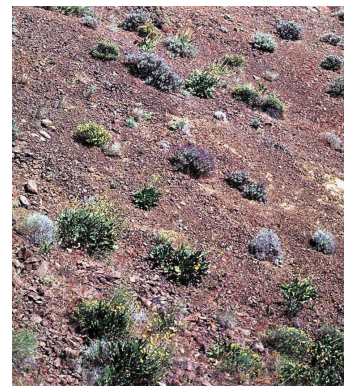


Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,  
©1959 University of Washington  
Press



© Richard Easterly and Debra  
Salstrom



© Richard Easterly and Debra  
Salstrom