

Cryptantha spiculifera (Piper) Payson

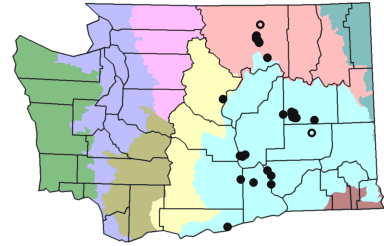
synonym: *Cryptantha interrupta* (Greene) Payson
(misapplied)

Snake River cryptantha

Boraginaceae - borage family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive

rank: G4? / S2?



General Description: Adapted from Cronquist *et al.* (1972-94): Perennial from a taproot and usually a branching caudex, with 1 to many erect stems, (0.5) 1.5-4 dm tall. Herbage gray-hairy, typically short and moderately spreading-bristly (but hairs sometimes appressed). Leaves hairy on both sides with fine, straight hairs; lower side with some longer, coarse, pustulate-based bristles that are appressed to loose and spreading. Petioles often conspicuously bristly-ciliate. Basal leaves densely tufted, narrowly to broadly oblanceolate, 2-6 cm x 2-10 mm. Stem leaves gradually reduced upwards.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescence bristly and soft-hairy, at first cylindric, opening in age. Calyx segments 4-5 mm long when flowering, 6-10 mm in fruit. Corolla white with small yellow crests in the throat, the tube equaling or shorter than the calyx; limb flat, spreading, 4-8 mm wide.

Fruits: 1-4 mature nutlets, lanceolate or lance-ovate, 2.5-4 mm long, roughened on both sides, typically both wrinkled and tuberculate; scar elongate, closed or narrowly open, its margins not elevated. Style surpassing nutlets by 1.1-2.5 (2.7) mm. Recognizable May to July.

Identification Tips: Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973) list *C. spiculifera* as a synonym for *Cryptantha interrupta*, but they are now considered distinct. *C. interrupta* has a shorter style, surpassing the nutlets by only 0.2-1 mm. *C. celosioides* is similar but distinguished by its wider basal leaves (4-15 mm) with blunter tips, and larger corolla limbs (8-12 mm). In dried specimens of *C. spiculifera*, the calyx has white bristles and hairs, versus golden-yellow bristles and hairs of *C. celosioides*.

Range: Central WA, eastern OR, northeastern CA, northern NV, ID, UT, WY, and western MT.

Habitat/Ecology: Dry, open, flat, or sloping areas in stable or stony soils, with low vegetative cover. Elevations in WA: 140-1050 m (450-3500 ft). Associated species include stiff sagebrush (*Artemisia rigida*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), gray rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), rock buckwheat (*Eriogonum sphaerocephalum*), purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*), and silky lupine (*Lupinus sericeus*).

Comments: This species is also rare in MT, UT, and WY.

References: Cronquist *et al.* 1972-94, vol. 4; Higgins 1971.

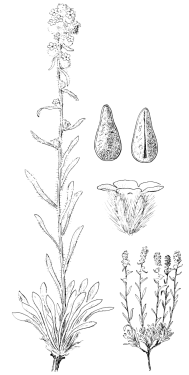


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