

Eurybia merita (A. Nelson) G.L. Nesom

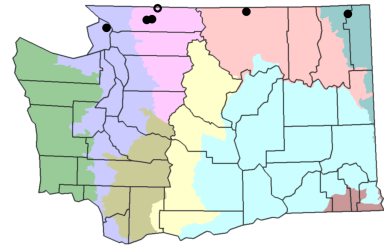
synonym: *Aster sibiricus* L. var. *meritus* (A. Nelson) Raup

Arctic aster

Asteraceae - aster family

status: State Sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S1S2



General Description: Rhizomatous perennial commonly 10 cm tall or less, but robust forms can be up to 50 cm tall. Plants glandless. Stems decumbent to ascending; stem and lower leaf surfaces sparsely to copiously short-haired. Leaves alternate, firm, sessile or the lower leaves subpetiolate, 2.5-8 cm x 4-25 mm, the very lowermost usually reduced; margins with a few small teeth or smooth. floral characteristics Radiate heads solitary to few, rarely up to 20 in a compact inflorescence. Involucre 6-9 mm high. Involucral bracts overlapping in several series, loose and sometimes squarrose, papery in texture and not green below, evidently to obscurely green-tipped above, and strongly purple-margined or suffused with purple. Rays usually 12-23, purple, 8-12 mm long. Flowers July to mid-September.



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Fruits: Achenes with several nerves; pappus with some shorter and more slender bristles of various lengths intermixed.

Identification Tips: Smaller forms of *Eurybia radulina** could be confused with *Eurybia merita*, but they are unlikely to co-occur in the same habitat. *E. radulina* is a larger, erect plant, 20-70 cm tall, with conspicuously toothed leaves and many flower heads with white (sometimes purplish) rays.

Range: Circumboreal. In N.A. extending southward from AK, B.C., and Alberta to CA, UT, WY, and SD.



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Habitat/Ecology: Open rocky places, rock crevices, alpine lithosols, and unstable talus slopes, mostly at high elevations in the mountains, from 700 to 2300 m (2400-7400 ft). The population on Mt. Constitution, San Juan Co., is the only in the state occurring below subalpine elevations. Associated species include shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa**), field chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), bluebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*, *C. scouleri*), saxifrage (*Saxifraga* spp.), field locoweed (*Oxytropis campestris*), and spreading phlox (*Phlox diffusa*).

Comments: There are 6 known occurrences in the state; 2 may have been lost. This species is also rare in CA, UT, and WY.



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References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 20.