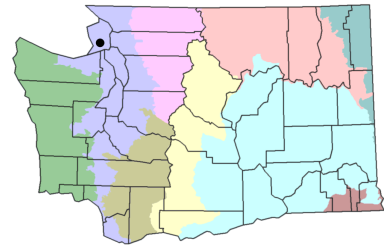


Lepidium oxycarpum Torr. & A. Gray
sharpfruited peppergrass
Brassicaceae - mustard family
status: State Endangered, BLM strategic
rank: G4 / S1



General Description: Slender, erect to spreading annual, 5-20 cm tall; minutely hairy, at least in the inflorescence. Basal leaves 2-6 cm long, pinnately divided into linear segments. Stem leaves mostly linear, entire, and not clasping the stem.

Floral Characteristics: Racemes open, elongate; pedicels distinctly flattened, about twice as broad as thick, spreading to reflexed, often curved, and usually slightly longer than the fruits. Sepals about 0.5 mm long; petals white, usually reduced or absent, but may be 0.5 mm long. Stamens usually 4.

Fruits: Ovate silicle, 2.5-3.5 x 2-2.5 mm, hairless, finely reticulate, with a broadly notched tip and two strongly divergent lobes not quite 1 mm long. Style lacking. Identifiable March to May.

Identification Tips: *L. dictyotum*, found east of the Cascades, also has lobed, reticulate-veined silicles, but its pedicels are usually shorter than the fruits and over twice as broad as thick. Its silicles are 3.25-4.5 mm long and usually hairy; the lobes may be over 1 mm long and parallel to each other or nearly so. *L. virginicum* var. *menziesii*, likely to occur in the same area, has round pedicels and elliptic to orbicular fruit without apical lobes.

Range: Chiefly found in south central CA. Extirpated from Victoria, B.C.

Habitat/Ecology: *L. oxycarpum* is coastal in WA, found in the salt spray zone, growing in moist cracks and vernal pools on bedrock, in sandy or dark saline soil in full sun. Associated species include prairie plantain (*Plantago elongata*), toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*), yellow hairgrass (*Aira praecox*), silver hairgrass (*Aira caryophyllea*), stickystem pearlwort (*Sagina maxima*), poverty brome (*Bromus sterilis*), and soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*). In CA it is also found inland: fields, vernal pool margins, borders of salt marshes, roadside ditches, saline soils, and alkaline flats.

Comments: Known from 1 occurrence in WA. Moist areas within the salt spray zone in San Juan Co. should be systematically surveyed for additional populations.

References: Rollins 1993.



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
©1964 University of Washington
Press



photo by Mark Sheehan

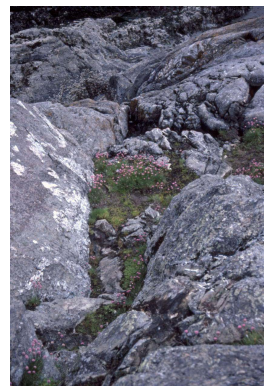


photo by Mark Sheehan