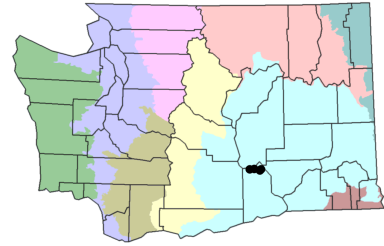


Loeflingia squarrosa Nutt.
spreading pygmyleaf
Caryophyllaceae - pink family
status: State Threatened, BLM strategic
rank: G5 / S1



General Description: Taprooted annual 1-12 cm tall with stiff stems, much-branched at the base, covered with stalked glands, somewhat fleshy. Leaves with bristlelike stipules 0.4-1.5 mm; blades 3-7 mm, needlelike, erect to recurved, tip blunt to sharply pointed, base generally fused into a short, thin sheath.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers are sessile in the leaf axils and self-fertilize without opening. Sepals 5, spine-tipped, glandular-hairy, 3.5-6 mm, becoming hardened, margins often thin and membranous. In fruit the outer pair of sepals are unequal, leaflike, with strongly recurved tips. Bristly lateral spurs are often present. Petals 0 or rudimentary. Flowers in May.

Fruits: Capsules 3-angled, 1.5-3.7 mm.

Identification Tips: This species is the only *Loeflingia* occurring in WA. It is distinguished from similar genera by its opposite leaves bearing bristlelike stipules, acute to spinose unequal sepals (usually with 2 filamentous to stiff lateral spurs), rudimentary or absent petals, axillary flowers, 3 styles, and capsules with 3 valves.

Range: Northern Baja California north to Santa Cruz Co., CA and eastward to NE, OK, AR, and TX. The WA occurrences are disjunct from the nearest known sites by approximately 1290 km (800 mi.)

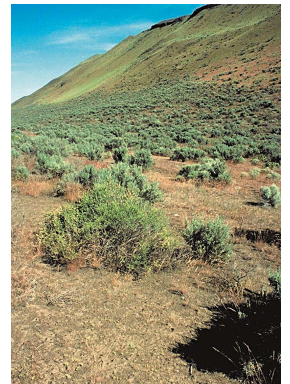
Habitat/Ecology: Low swales and shallow vernal pools in sandy and silty areas. The WA populations were found during an unusually wet year in swales and vernal wet areas with a great diversity of annuals in an otherwise arid environment. Associated species include sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), matted cryptantha (*Cryptantha circumscissa*), Suksdorf's monkeyflower (*Mimulus suksdorfii*), jagged chickweed (*Holosteum umbellatum*), pink microsteris (*Microsteris gracilis*), lowland cudweed (*Gnaphalium palustre*), small-flowered willow herb (*Epilobium minutum*), shy gilia (*Gilia sinuata*), and toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*). Elevations in WA: 130-180 m (430-580 ft).

Comments: This small annual may be easily overlooked. The few known occurrences in WA are in a very small geographic area. They occur near roads, thus roadside maintenance, ground disturbance, and herbicide spraying are potential threats. This taxon is rare in WY and possibly extirpated from ID.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 5; Hickman 1993.



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