

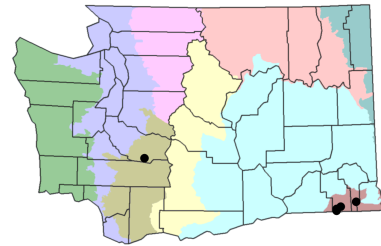
## ***Ranunculus populago*** Greene

mountain buttercup

Ranunculaceae - buttercup family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G4 / S2



**General Description:** Hairless to sparsely stiff-haired perennial; clustered fibrous roots are thickened and fleshy at the base. Stems 1 to several, usually erect, sometimes prostrate but not rooting at the nodes, 1-3 (4) dm long, somewhat hollow, often branched above the base. Basal leaves with a petiole usually several times as long as the blade; blades distinctly heart-shaped to narrowly ovate, (1) 2-5 x 1-5 cm, with entire to wavy or toothed margins. Lower stem leaves alternate with short petioles; upper stem leaves nearly opposite and nearly sessile, usually narrower than the basal leaves.

**Floral Characteristics:** Flowers 1-5 in the upper axils; solitary on slender pedicels up to 6 cm long. Sepals 5, greenish yellow, 2-5 mm long. Petals 5 (to 7), deep yellow, 4-7 mm long. Nectary scale smooth, about 0.7 mm long, pocketlike, the lateral margins adnate almost full length.

**Fruits:** Achenes 7-25, smooth, hairless to sparsely hairy, 1.6-2 mm long, strongly flattened. Styler beak about 0.7 mm long, straight, and slender. Flowers and fruits July to August.

**Identification Tips:** *Ranunculus gormanii* is similar but has prostrate stems that root at the nodes, and produces only 10-15 achenes. *R. alismifolius* has basal leaf blades with acute bases; in contrast, *R. populago* has broadly obtuse or heart-shaped basal leaf bases.

**Range:** WA, east through ID to central MT, south to central OR and CA.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Moist meadows, stream terraces, riparian corridors, open areas along shrub thickets, and adjacent to perennial streams and bogs. Elevations in WA: 1300-1800 m (4400-6000 ft). Associated species include western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*), grand fir (*Abies grandis*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), mock-orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), western bugbane (*Trautvetteria caroliniensis* var. *occidentalis*), green false hellebore (*Veratrum viride*), Gray's licorice-root (*Ligusticum grayi*), and marsh cinquefoil (*Comarum palustre*). Soils are deep, moist, and fine or gravelly to clayey.

**Comments:** There are fewer than 5 occurrences of the taxon in WA. It is also rare in MT.

**References:** Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 3.



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