

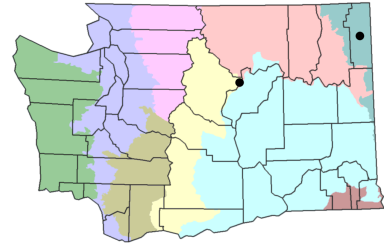
Sisyrinchium montanum* Greene var. *montanum

strict blue-eyed-grass

Iridaceae - iris family

status: State Threatened, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5T4T5 / S1



General Description: Adapted from Flora of North America (1993+): Matted perennial in small, dense tufts up to 50 cm tall. Stems unbranched, (1.5) 2-3.7 mm wide, obviously 2-winged, hairless, with finely toothed margins above. Leaf blades mostly basal, hairless, linear, generally shorter and narrower than the stem.

Floral Characteristics: Inflorescences borne singly, terminal, erect to nodding. Sheathing bracts 2, hairless, usually green or bronze, rarely with purplish margins. Outer bract 36-76 mm long, 14-46 mm longer than the inner, with margins fused basally for 1-3.5 mm. Inner bract with somewhat swollen keel basally and translucent margins 0.1-0.3 mm wide. Tepals 6, dark blue to bluish purple with yellow bases, broadly elliptic to oblanceolate; outer tepals 9-14.5 mm long, rounded to blunt, notched, abruptly awn-tipped. Flowers in May.

Fruits: Capsules 4-6.8 mm long, obovoid, tan to dark brown (sometimes purplish above); seeds numerous, black, slightly wrinkled.

Identification Tips: This species is not in Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973). Field observation of flower color at bloom time is critical for identification. *Sisyrinchium idahoense* is distinguished by its outer bract, which is no more than 16 mm longer than the inner bract, and usually fused basally for 4-6 (7) mm. Additionally, the keel of the inner bract is not swollen basally, its stems are 1-2.5 mm wide, and it has a granular seed coat. *S. septentrionale* has lighter blue tepals with rounded tips that are not notched, and an inner bract that is not swollen basally.

Range: Southern Canada and the northern U.S., from B.C. south to NM, and east to TX, KS, IN, and NY. The WA populations are at the edge of the species' range.

Habitat/Ecology: Moist meadows, stream banks, mossy springs, and open woods in steppe and montane zones. Elevation in WA: 215 m (700 ft). Associated species include ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), white sagebrush (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), dwarf evening primrose (*Oenothera strigosa*), and Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*).

Comments: Threats include residential development and trampling. This taxon is also rare in the Yukon, AK, and several states.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 26; Henderson 1976.



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