

***Swertia perennis* L.**  
swertia  
Gentianaceae (Gentian Family)

**Status:** State Review Group 1  
**Rank:** G5S1?

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1969) and Hickman et al. (1993): This rhizomatous, generally perennial plant is 4 to 20 in. (10-13 cm) high, with a thick, glabrous stem and one to few rosettes of basal leaves. The basal leaves are spoon-shaped to obovate with rounded tips. The cauline leaves are elliptic to obolanceolate shaped and opposite to alternate with pointed tips. The inflorescence is open and the flower pedicels are 1/16 to 1 1/4 in. (2-30 mm) long. The flowers can have either 4 petals and sepals or 5 petals and sepals. The calyx is 1/8 to 1/2 in. (4-8 mm) long. The petals are bluish-white to violet-blue with darker veins, and variously splotched with greenish or white. The lobes of the petals are lance-oblong and acute and are 1/4 to 1/2 in. (8-11 mm) long. The corolla tube has pits on the surface, with small scales below them, and is completely surrounded by fringed hoods. The style is less than 1 mm long and the compressed lance-ellipsoid shaped capsule is 1/4 to 1/2 in. (7-12 mm) long.

**Identification Tips:** *Swertia perennis* is the only species of *Swertia* in North America. *Swertia* can be distinguished from the closely related genus *Frasera* by its small, thick style that is less than 1 mm long. Species in *Frasera* have a slender style that is greater than 2 mm long.

**Phenology:** This species flowers from July to August.

**Range:** This species is found scattered throughout western North America. In Washington it has been found in Snohomish and Chelan counties.

**Habitat:** There is little known of the habitat of this species in Washington. One occurrence was found at an elevation of 5680 feet (1731 m).

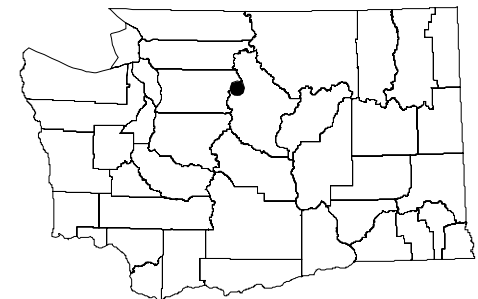
**Ecology:** This species is found in mountainous sub-alpine areas in moist meadowland, bogs, stream banks, and other moist places.

***Swertia perennis***  
swertia



©1959 Reprinted by permission of the University of Washington Press.  
Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish

Known distribution  
of *Swertia perennis*  
in Washington



● Current (1980+)  
○ Historic (older than 1980)

***Swertia perennis***

swertia



Gene Yates

2005 Produced as part of a cooperative project between the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Natural Heritage Program and the U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management. Persons needing this information in an alternative format, call (360) 902-1600 or TTY (360) 902-1125.

***Swertia perennis***

swertia

**State Status Comments:** Because this species was recently added to the Washington rare plant list, not much is known about the degree of its rarity in the state at this time.

**Inventory Needs:** Additional inventory is needed in appropriate habitats in Washington.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Potential threats to this species include hydrological alterations and recreation.

**References:**

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1959. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 4: Ericaceae Through Campanulaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 510 pp.

Hickman, J.C. 1993. *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1400 pp.

2005 Produced as part of a cooperative project between the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Natural Heritage Program and the U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management. Persons needing this information in an alternative format, call (360) 902-1600 or TTY (360) 902-1125.