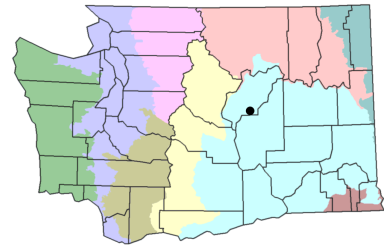


***Sandbergia perplexa*** (L. F. Henderson) Al-Shehbaz  
synonym: *Halimolobos perplexa* (L.F. Hend.) Rollins var.  
*perplexa*, *Halimolobos perplexus* (L.F. Hend.) Rollins var.  
*perplexus*

puzzling rockcress

Brassicaceae - mustard family

status: State Threatened, BLM strategic - rank: G4T3 /  
S1



**General Description:** Grayish perennial or biennial with stalked, coarse, star-shaped hairs. Stems 1 to several, usually sparingly branched near the base, 1-3.5 dm tall. WA plants usually have decumbent stems, unlike the erect plants from ID. Leaves greenish gray. Basal leaves numerous, 2-4 (5) cm long, rosette-forming, with short petioles, oblanceolate, deeply toothed to shallowly lobed. Stem leaves reduced, several, with the upper ones sessile, entire to more deeply toothed than the basal leaves.

**Floral Characteristics:** Racemes elongate, unbranched, and loose in fruit. Pedicels slender, 5-10 mm long, spreading to ascending. Style 0.3-0.6 mm. Outer sepals sack-shaped at the base. Petals white, sometimes pinkish-tinged, (3) 6-8 mm long.

**Fruits:** Siliques ascending to erect, nearly cylindrical, usually covered with star-shaped hairs, 1-2 cm x 1-1.2 mm, strongly constricted between the seeds. Flowers and fruits in May.

**Identification Tips:** *S. perplexa* can be distinguished from *S. whitedii* by its coarsely dentate to pinnatifid cauline leaves and its fruits, which have pronounced constrictions between seeds. *S. whitedii* has cauline leaf margins that are usually smooth edged with only slightly constricted fruits. WA plants of *S. perplexa* are decumbent and associated with open bare soil, while *S. whitedii* is upright and associated with rocky areas.

**Range:** Until recently, *S. perplexa* was thought to be endemic to ID. It is disjunct in WA, occurring several hundred miles west of its previously known range.

**Habitat/Ecology:** The single WA population occurs in reddish, clay-rich soil with scattered rock, at 530 m (1750 ft) elevation. The site is mostly flat with 30% cover of bare ground. Associated species include thymeleaf buckwheat (*Eriogonum thymoides*) and Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*). In ID the taxon is found on steep, rocky slopes in a forested area.

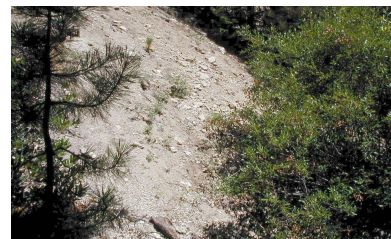
**Comments:** The WA population consists of fewer than 15 individuals. This taxon is also rare in ID.



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



© Michael Mancuso



© Chantelle Delay