

Review of Selected Rare Plants of Central Colorado

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**WARNER COLLEGE OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



Primary References

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Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). 2025. Biodiversity Tracking and Conservation System (Biotics). Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

iNaturalist. 2025. [inaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org).

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NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Network Biodiversity Location Data accessed through NatureServe Explorer [web application]. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. <https://explorer.natureserve.org/>.

Personal communications; Peer-reviewed publications

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Plants of the World Online. 2025. <https://powo.science.kew.org/>.

SEINet Portal Network. 2025. <http://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/index.php>.

USDA, NRCS. 2025. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC. USA.

Aster alpinus var. *vierhapperi*
Alpine Aster

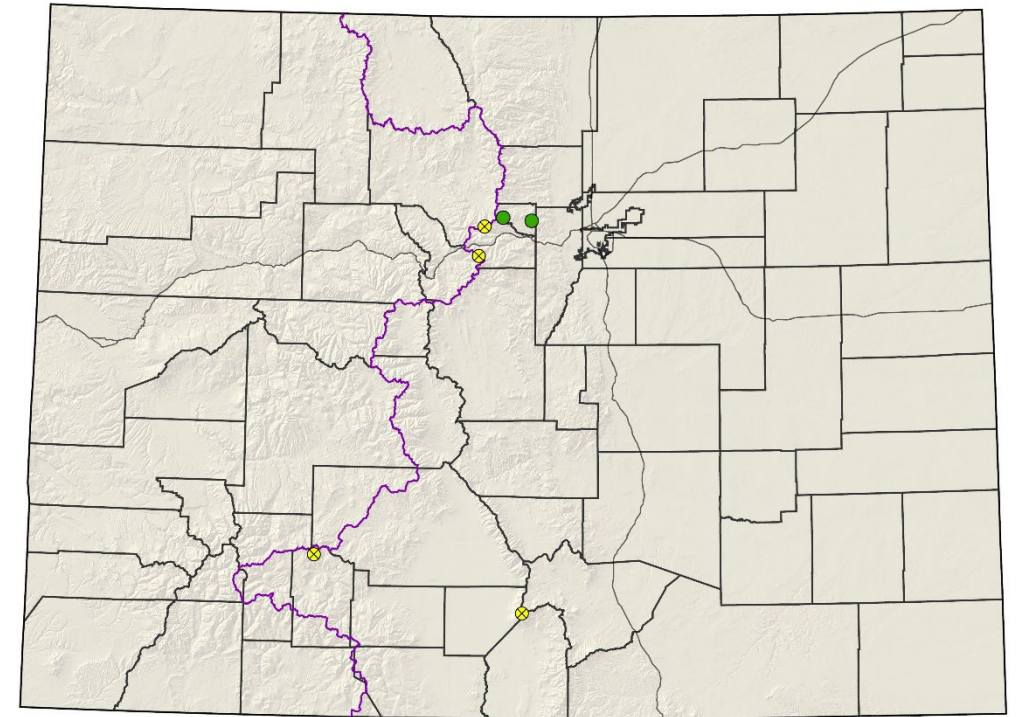
Rank: G5T5/S1

Status: N/A

Elevation: 8,500 – 12,500 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 6

Historical: 4



- Global distribution: CO (Alamosa, Gilpin, Clear Creek, Grand, Mineral), WY, AK, Canada (Ontario, Alberta, B.C., N.W. Territories, Yukon), central Asia; **Disjunct in Colorado**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2024, Matt Langemeier and Bob Lagier (iNat)
- Threats: small number of occurrences, recreation, mining, climate change
- Land ownership/management: Private, State, USFS



Aster alpinus var. *vierhapperi*

Alpine Aster



Matt Langemeier



Matt Langemeier



Matt Langemeier



Specimen Present

Eriogonum arcuatum var. *xanthum* (*Eriogonum jamesii*
var. *xanthum*)

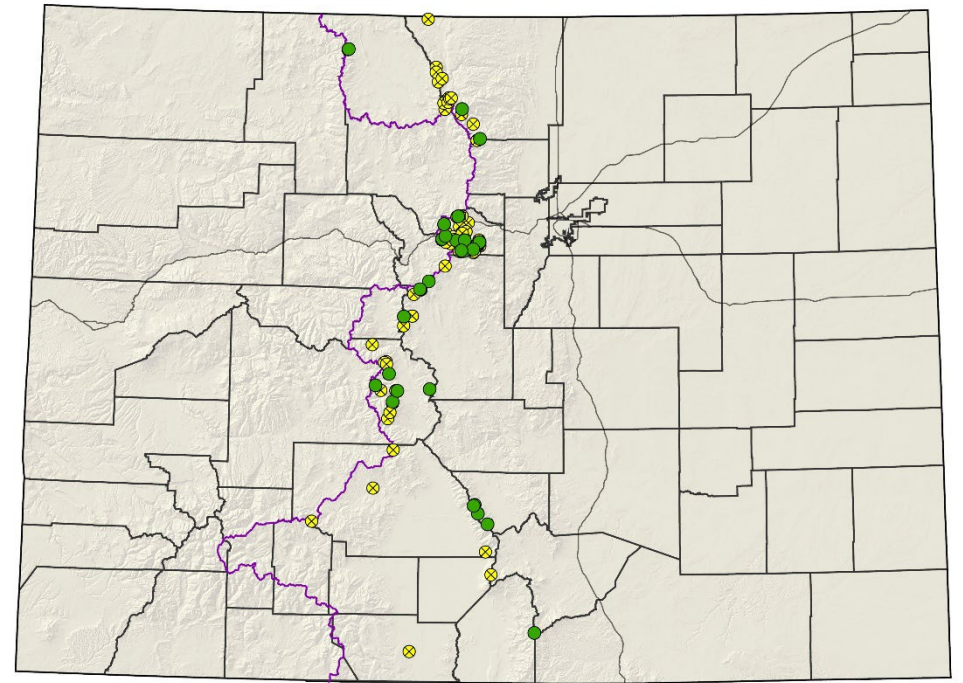
Ivy League Buckwheat

Rank: G5T2T4/S3

Status: SGIN

Elevation: 9,500 – 13,500 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: Under Development



- Global Distribution: CO (Alamosa, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Conejos, Costilla, Gilpin, Jackson, Lake, Larimer, Park, Saguache, Summit); NM
- Last observed in Colorado: CNHP 2025 (B. Harris, C. Anderson, E. Marx)
- Threats: To be determined
- Land ownership/management: NPS, Private, USFS



Eriogonum arcuatum var. *xanthum* James' Buckwheat



Specimen Present

Eriogonum umbellatum var. *ramulosum*
Buffalo Bill's Sulphur Flower

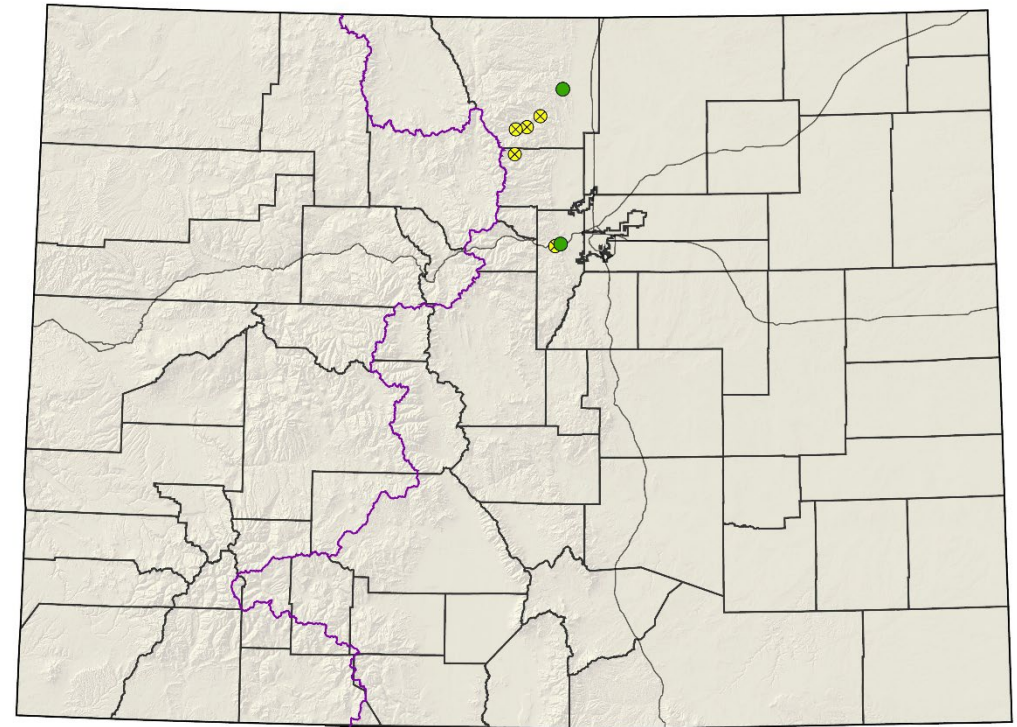
Rank: G5TNR/S2

Status: N/A

Elevation: 5,200 – 9,000 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 7

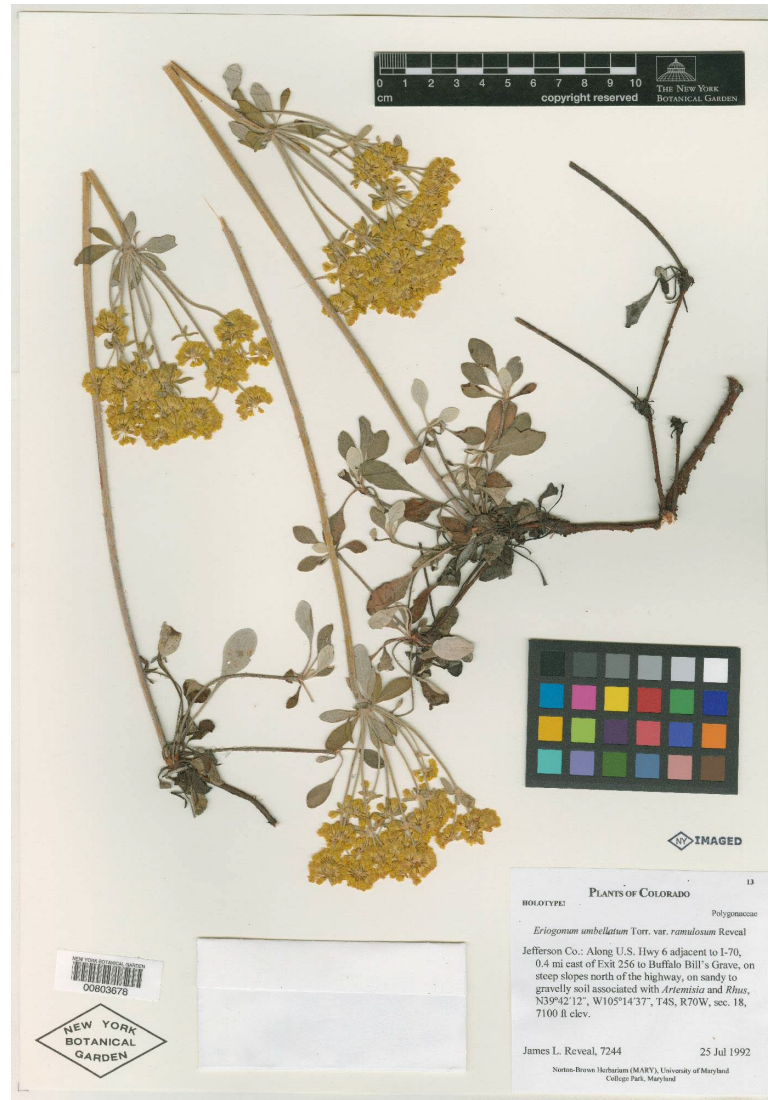
Historical: 5



- Global Distribution: CO (Jefferson, Boulder, Larimer), **Colorado Endemic**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2023 (C. Strouse et al.), 2020 (T. Schweich)
- Threats: To be determined
- Land ownership/management: Local, Private, NPS



Eriogonum umbellatum var. *ramulosum* Buffalo Bill's Sulphur Flower



Specimen Present

Erythranthe gemmipara
Rocky Mountain Monkeyflower

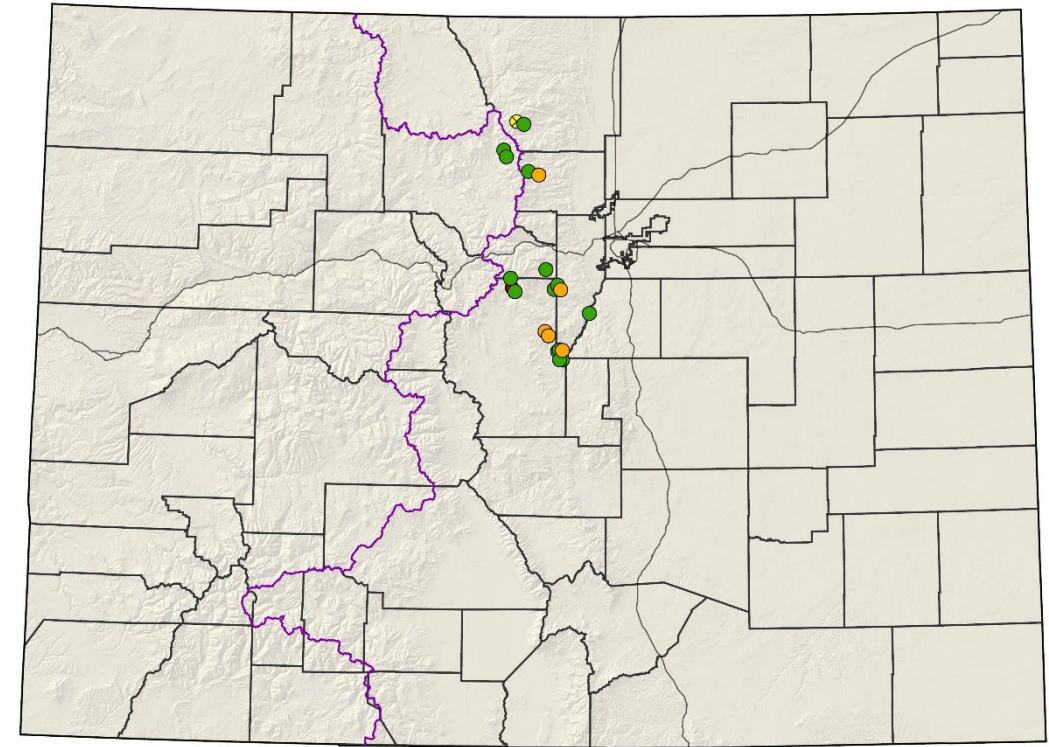
Rank: G1/S1

Status: Tier 1

Elevation: 8,400 – 11,000 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 20

Historical: 1



- Global Distribution: CO (Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer, and Park), **Colorado Endemic**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2025, CPW (S. Smith, M. Beardsley)
- Threats: Trampling, fire and fire mitigation, changes in moisture regime, small occupied areas, moderately to extremely vulnerable to climate change (SWAP 2025)
- Land ownership/management: CPW, NPS, USFS



Erythranthe gemmipara Rocky Mountain Monkeyflower



Notable *Erythranthe* species

Tracked

- Eastwood Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe eastwoodiae*) Rank: G3G4/S1S2
- Hall's Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe hallii*) Rank: G3/S3
Status: SGIN, CO Endemic
- Lewis Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe lewisii*) Rank: G5/S2

Watch listed (poorly known)

- Musk Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe moschata*) Rank: G5/S2
- Utah Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe utahensis*) Rank: G4G5/S1



Mertensia humilis
Rocky Mountain Bluebells

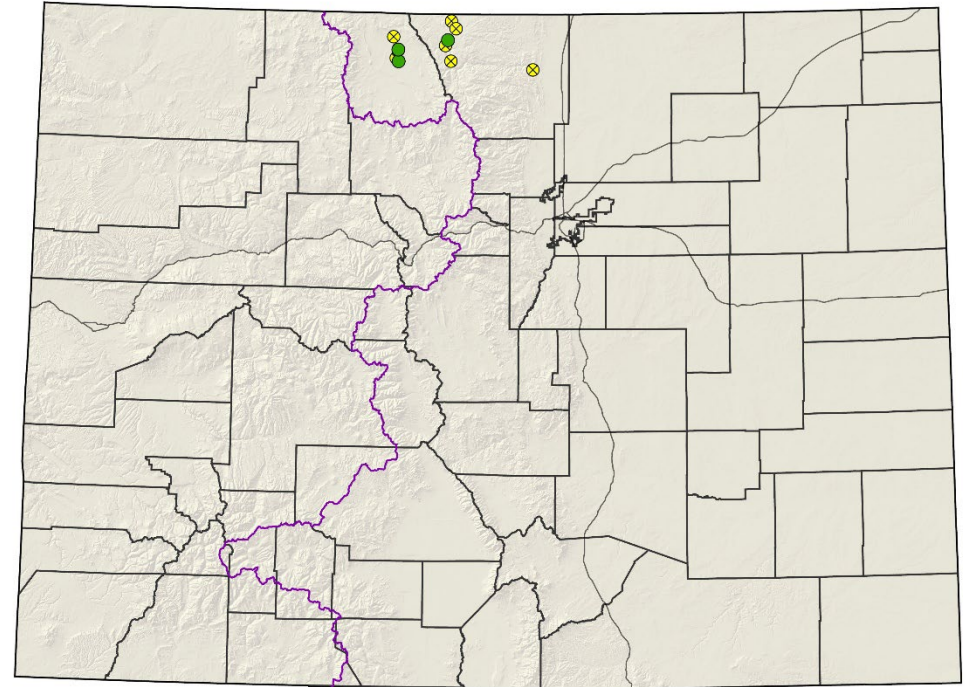
Rank: G3/S1

Status: SGIN

Elevation: 5,260 – 9,562 ft. (CNHP 2025)

CO occurrences: 11

Historical: 8



- Global Distribution: CO (Jackson, Larimer); in Wyoming ranked as S3
- Last observed in Colorado: 2020 (J. Lemly, iNat), 2019 (R.L. Johnson specimen)
- Threats: None documented, considered extremely vulnerable to climate change (2015)
- Land ownership/management: BLM, CPW, Local, USFS, USFWS



Mertensia humilis

Rocky Mountain Bluebells



Susan Panjabi



Scotty Smith



Joanna Lemly



Bernadette Kuhn

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

Specimen Present

Notable *Mertensia* species

Watch listed, poorly known

- 14 Species

Tracked

- Graham's Bluebells (*Mertensia grahamii*) Rank: GNR, S2, **CO Endemic**
- One-sided Bluebell (*Mertensia secundorum*), G5T3?Q/S2, **SGIN**, **CO Endemic**
- Front Range Bluebells (*Mertensia brachyloba*), G5T1T3/S1S3, **SGIN**, **CO Endemic**



Oenothera coloradensis (*Gaura neomexicana* ssp. *coloradensis*)

Colorado Butterfly Plant

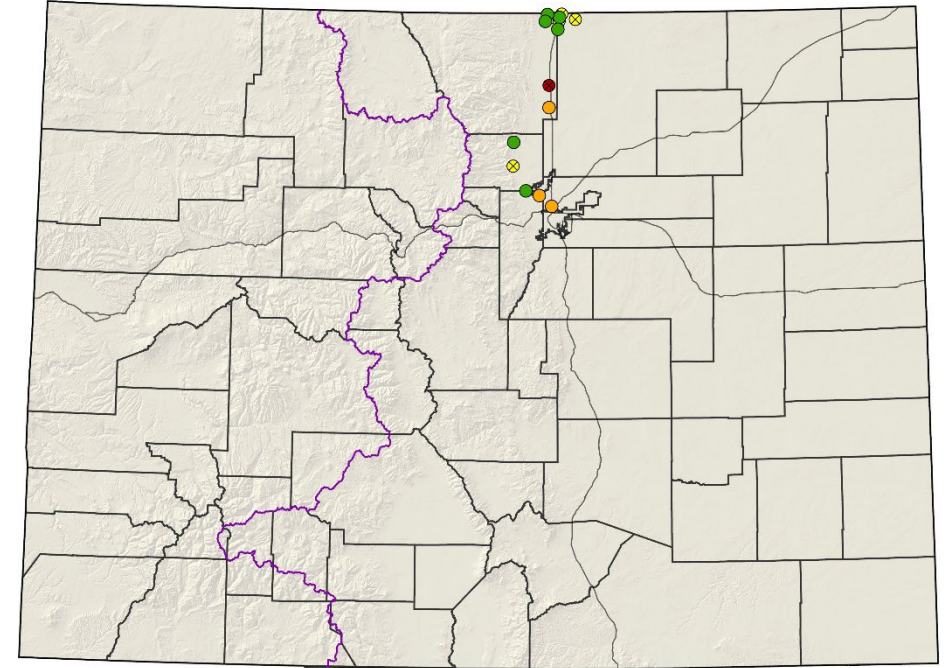
Rank: G3T2/S1

Status: Tier 2, delisted (2019)

Elevation: 5,800 – 6,500 Ackerfield

CO occurrences: 15

Historical: 3; # Failed to Find: 3, # Possibly Extirpated: 1



- Global Distribution: CO (Adams, Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Larimer, Weld), NE, WY
- Last observed in Colorado: 2025 (C. Strouse), 2025 (Backiewicz, iNat), 2025 (Evans, iNat)
- Threats: hydrologic alteration, incompatible livestock grazing, invasive plant species, herbicide spraying, haying and mowing, water development, urban expansion, extremely vulnerable to climate change (SWAP 2025)
- Land ownership/management: Local, State, Private



Oenothera coloradensis

Colorado Butterfly Plant



Crystal Strouse



Georgia Doyle



Katie M Nichols

Specimen Present

Oreoxis humilis
Pike's Peak Spring Parsley

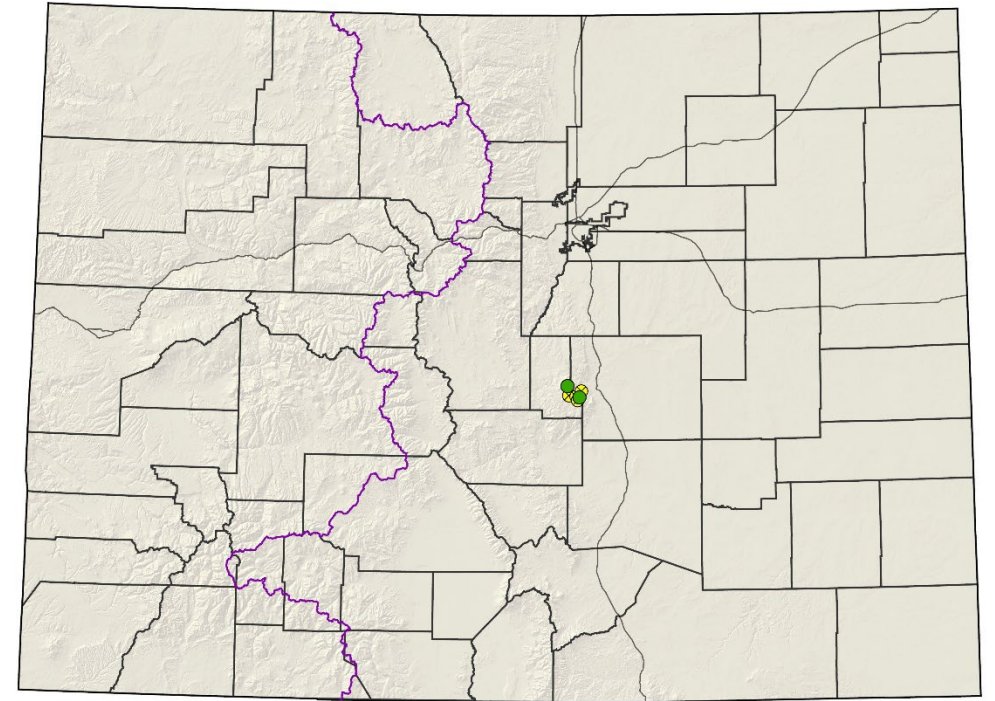
Rank: G1/S1

Status: SGIN

Elevation: 11,900 – 14,000 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 6

Historical: 4



- Global Distribution: CO (El Paso and Teller), **Colorado Endemic**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2024-2023 (iNat: Nimz, Wrens, Shorma), 2022 Seglias and Shuman
- Threats: Road erosion, construction, motorized and non-motorized recreation, 2015 CCVI – Extremely Vulnerable
- Land ownership/management: USFS



Oreoxis humilis

Pike's Peak Spring Parsley



<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

Sharon Eaton

Specimen Present

Physaria bellii
Bell's Twinpod

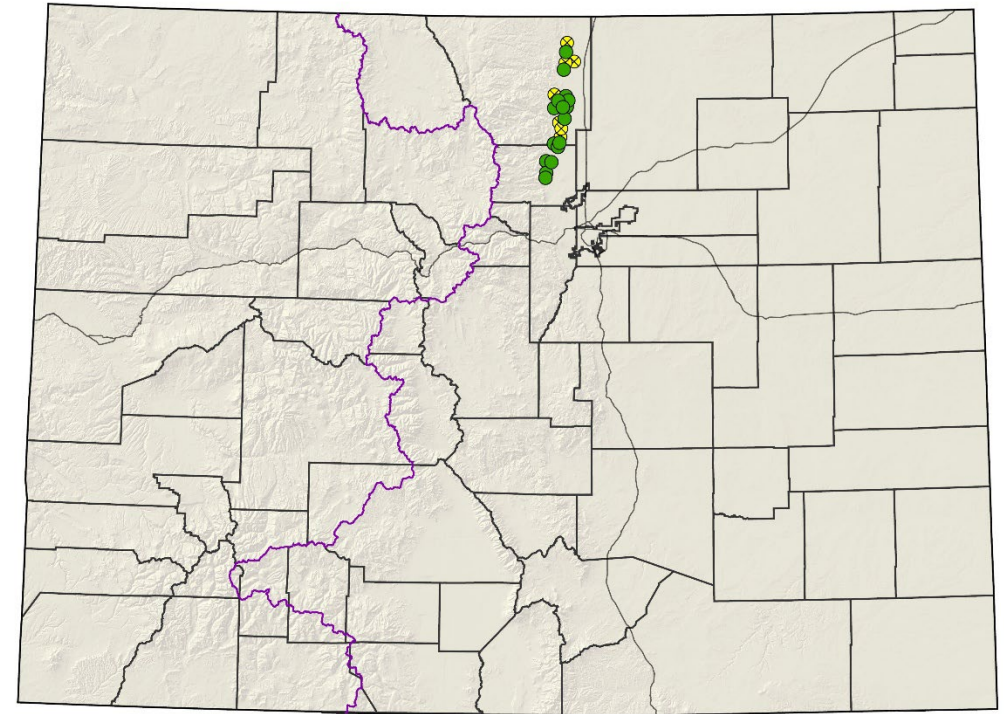
Rank: G2/S2

Status: Tier 1

Elevation: 5,100 – 5,800 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 25

Historical: 7

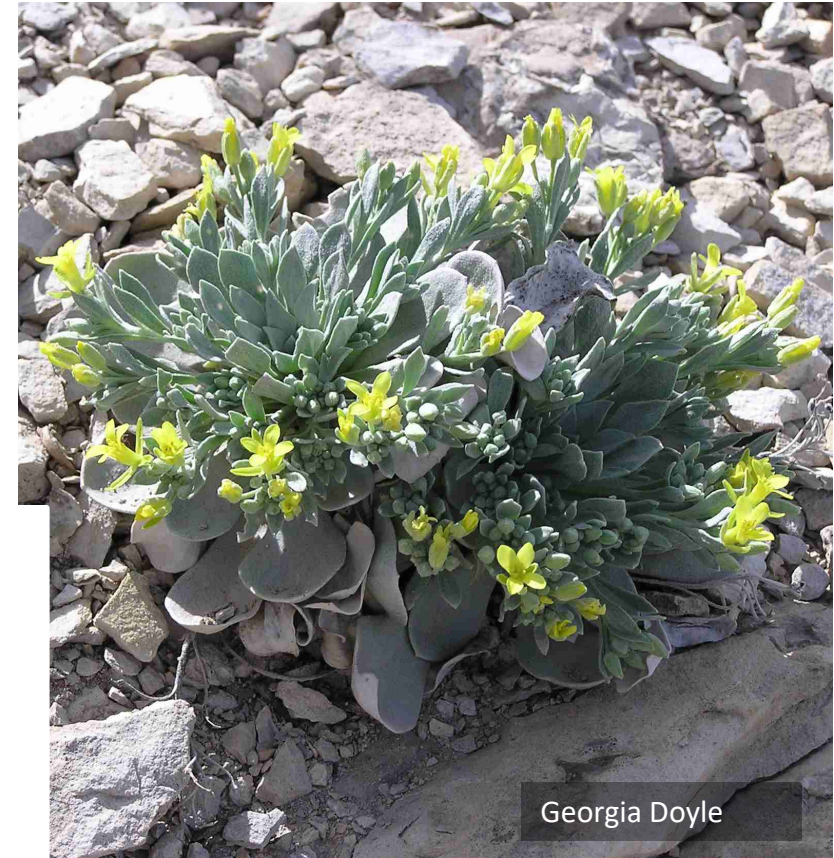


- Global Distribution: CO (Boulder, Larimer), **Colorado Endemic**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2025 (kelptaylor, iNat)
- Threats: Residential development, non-motorized recreation, limestone mining operations, road construction and maintenance, invasive species, moderately to extremely vulnerable to climate change (2025 SWAP)
- Land ownership/management: Local, Private, SLB



Physaria bellii

Bell's Twinpod



Constance Sayas

Physaria bellii

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

Specimen Present

Physaria vitulifera
Fiddleleaf Twinpod

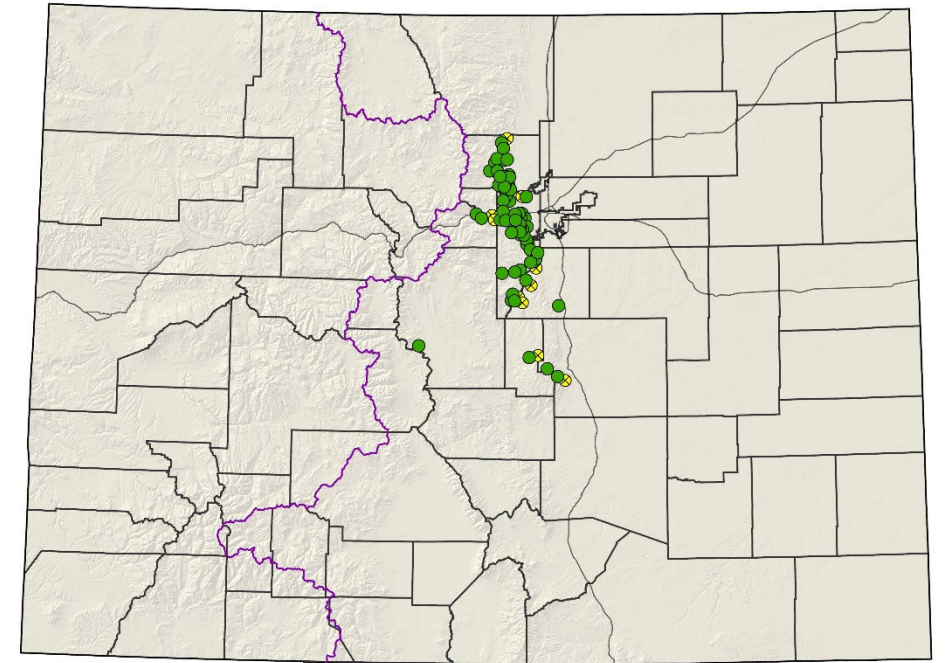
Rank: G3/S3

Status: Tier 2

Elevation: 5,000 – 9,800 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 79

Historical: 13



- Global Distribution: CO (Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Gilpin, Jefferson, Park, Teller), **Colorado Endemic**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2025 (timothyd488, iNat)
- Threats: Housing/urban development, road and utility line maintenance, recreational uses, noxious weed invasions, moderately vulnerable to climate change (2025 SWAP)
- Land ownership/management: Local, Private, USFWS, USFS



Physaria vitulifera

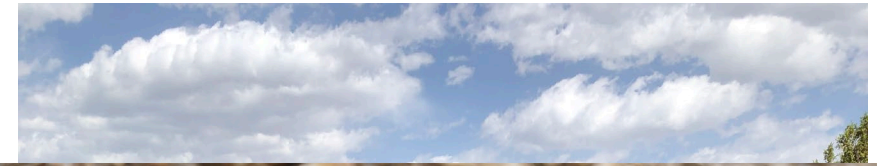
Fiddleleaf Twinpod



Raquel Wertsbaugh



Jessica Smith



Lucy Haggard



Lucy Haggard

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

Specimen Present

Ribes niveum
Snow Gooseberry

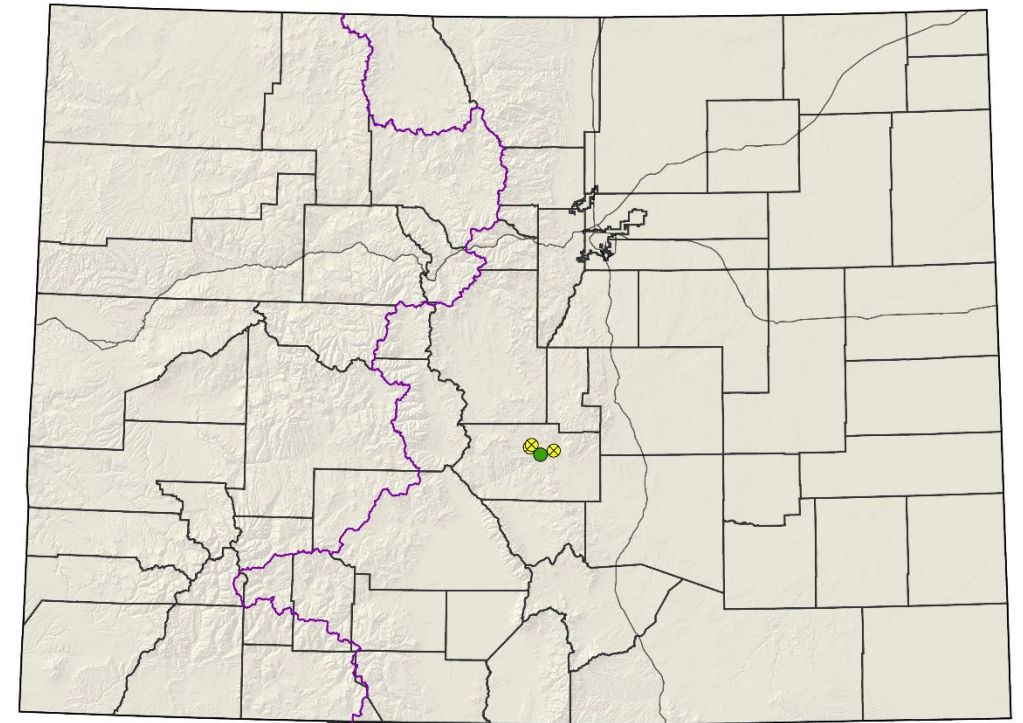
Rank: G3?/S1

Status: SGIN

Elevation: 5,000 – 6,000 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 4

Historical: 3



- Global Distribution: CO (Fremont), ID, NV, OR, WA, **Disjunct in Colorado**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2025 (Shorma, iNat); 2023 (Langemeier, iNat); 2023 (Smith, iNat)
- Threats: To be determined
- Land ownership/management: BLM, SLB, Private



Ribes niveum

Snow Gooseberry



<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

Specimen Present

Salix calcicola var. *glandulosior*
Lime-loving Willow

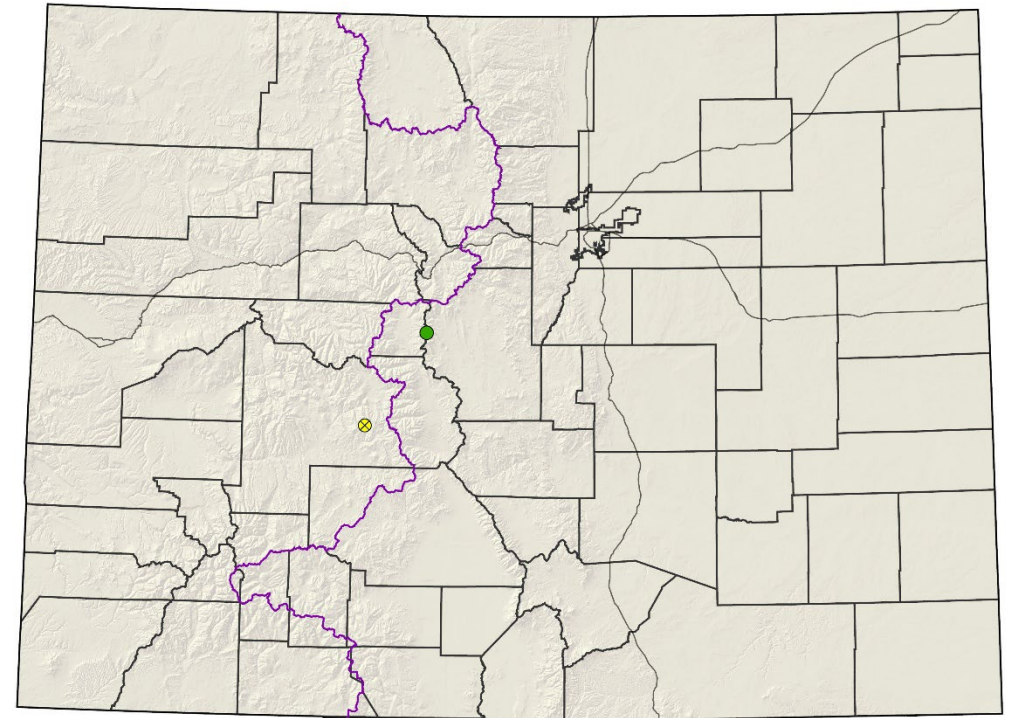
Rank: G4G5T1T2/S1

Status: Tier 1

Elevation: 11,200 – 12,500 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 2

Historical: 1

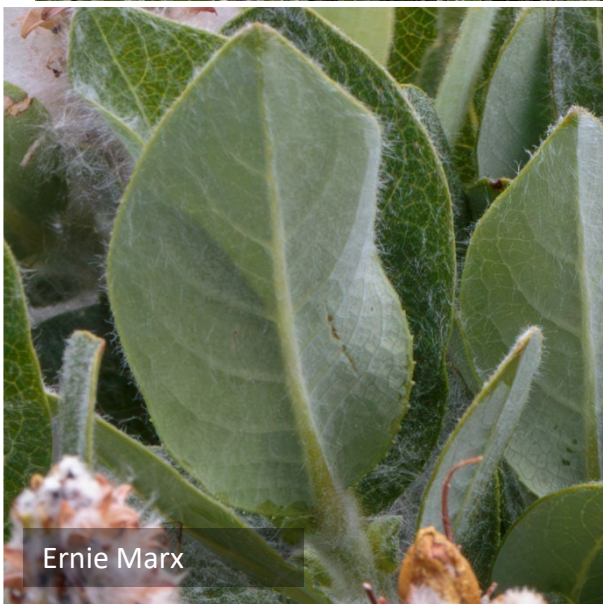


- Global Distribution: CO (Gunnison, Park), Alberta Canada, **Disjunct in Colorado**
- Last observed in Colorado: 2024 (Marx, iNat)
- Threats: hydrologic alterations, motorized recreation, moderately to extremely vulnerable to climate change (SWAP 2025)
- Land ownership/management: USFS



Salix calcicola var. *glandulosior*

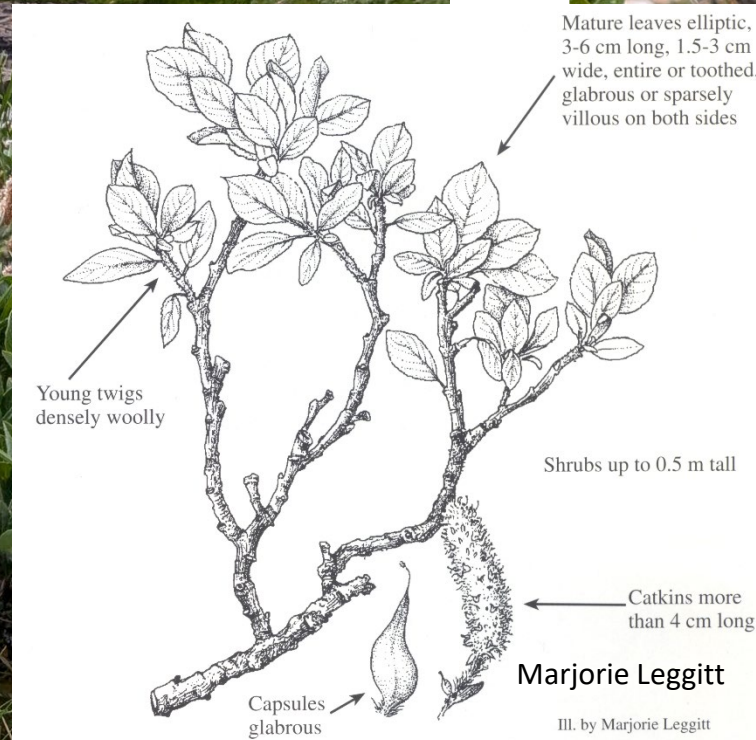
Lime-loving Willow



Ernie Marx



Ernie Marx



Jennifer Ackerfield

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

Willows (*Salix*) of Colorado, Gwen Kittel

Specimen Present

Spiranthes diluvialis
Ute Ladies' Tresses

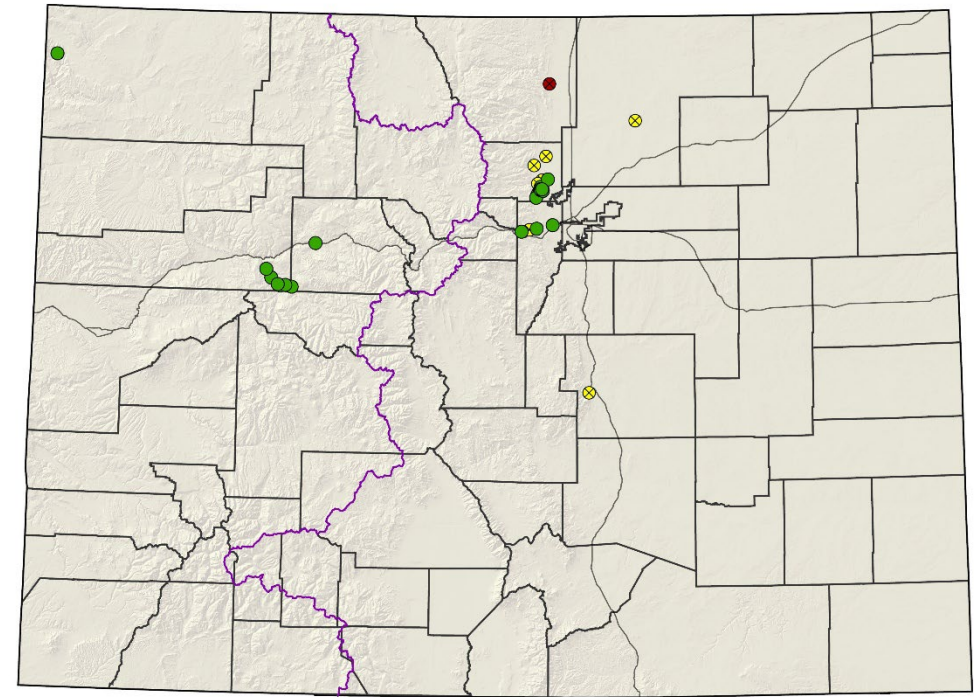
Rank: G2G3/S2

Status: Tier 1, Federally Listed Threatened

Elevation: 4,526 – 7,735 ft. (CNHP 2025)

CO occurrences: 23

Historical: 8; Possibly Extirpated: 1



- Global Distribution: CO (Boulder, Eagle, Garfield, Jefferson, Larimer, and Moffat), ID, MT, NE, NV, UT, WA, WY, British Columbia (Canada)
- Last observed in Colorado: 2025 (Gottschalk, S. Smith), 2023 (Gorrell, iNat)
- Threats: water development, hydrologic alteration, inappropriate livestock grazing, exotic plant species invasion, habitat fragmentation, moderately to extremely vulnerable to climate change (SWAP 2025)
- Land ownership/management: CPW, Local, NPS, Private, USFWS



Spiranthes diluvialis

Ute Ladies' Tresses



David Anderson



Savanna Smith



Savanna Smith

Specimen Present

Trifolium anemophilum (*Trifolium dasyphyllum* ssp. *anemophilum*)

Whip-root Clover

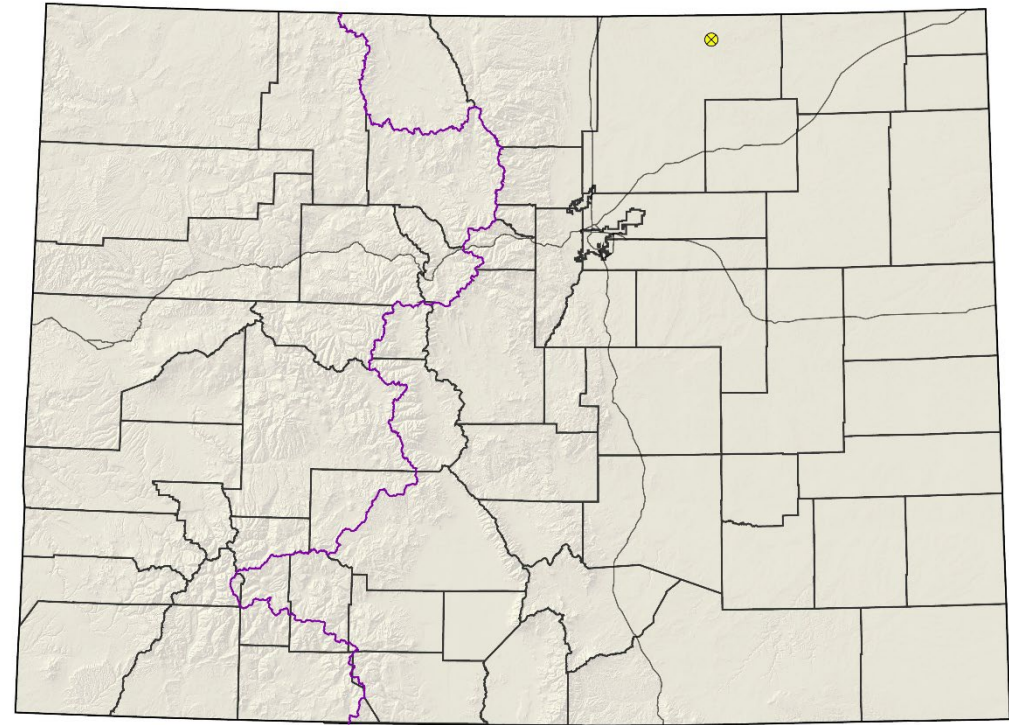
Rank: G5T2?/S1

Status: SGIN

Elevation: 5,400 – 6,000 ft. (Ackerfield 2022)

CO occurrences: 1

Historical: 1

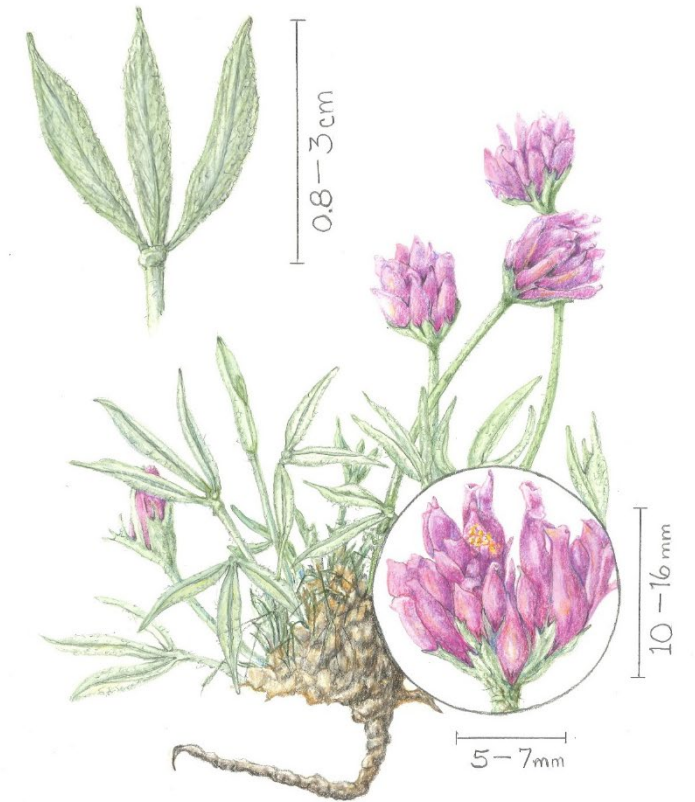


- Global Distribution: CO (Weld), WY
- Last observed in Colorado: 1999, Hazlett
- Threats: wind turbine development, considered extremely vulnerable to climate change (SWAP 2015)
- Land ownership/management: Private



Trifolium anemophilum

Laramie Hills Clover



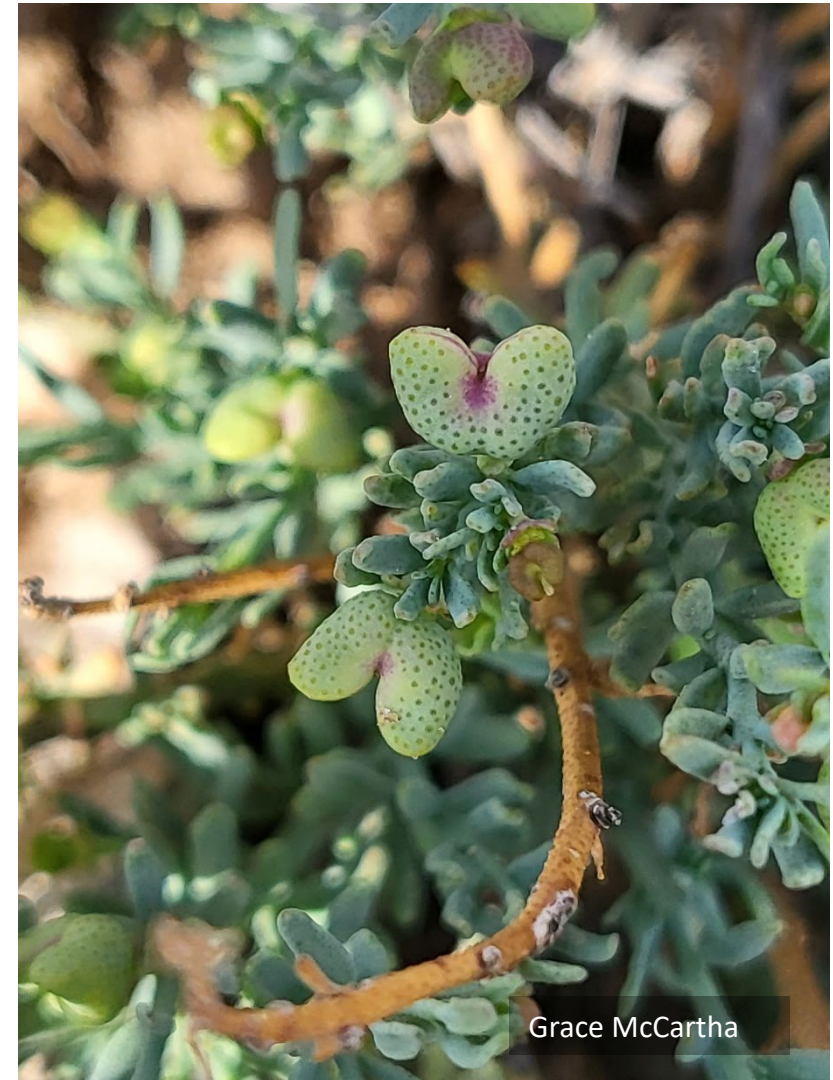
Leslie Crosby

State Historical Species

State Historical Species

- Last observation over 50 years
- CNHP tracked
- 28 species statewide
- 9 highlighted from this region

Dutchman's Breeches (*Thamnosma texana*) Rank: G5/SH



How You Can Help! Contribute Data

- Submit element occurrence & iNat records
- Find new occurrences
- SNHS community science opportunities
- Learn to recognize rare plant species

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/ourdata/contribute-data/>

Thank you!

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