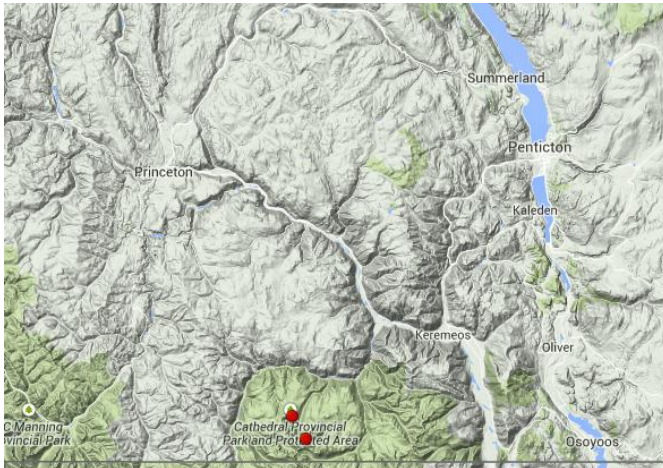


# Alpine Buckwheat (*Eriogonum pyrolifolium* var. *coryphaeum*)

## Polygonaceae (Buckwheat Family)

### RANGE

- Found in North America from British Columbia south to Idaho, Montana, and California (USA)
- In B.C., known from only three locations within a relatively small area in Cathedral Provincial Park and Protected Area



**Figure 1** B.C. distribution of *Eriogonum pyrolifolium* (BC CDC 2014)

### HABITAT

- Open, rocky (sometimes sandy) sites and in talus or fine scree at high elevations in subalpine and alpine habitats in the Interior Mountain Heather Alpine Zone Biogeoclimatic Zone
- Associates include pussytoes (*Antennaria* sp.), Mount Hood pussypaws (*Cistanthe umbellata*), kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), juniper (*Juniperus* sp.), heather and blue-listed Brandegee's lomatium (*Lomatium brandegeei*)



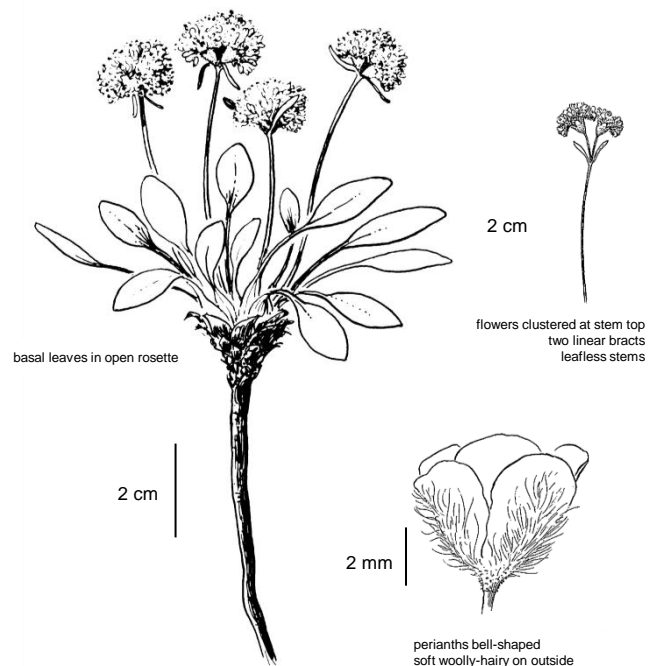
**Figure 2** Open, rocky, high-elevation habitat in Cathedral Provincial Park and Protected Area, B.C.



**Figure 3** Example of subalpine and alpine habitat in Cathedral Provincial Park and Protected Area, B.C.

### LIFE HISTORY

- Perennial species that blooms from June into September
- As the flowers wither and die, achenes are released
- Does not reproduce vegetatively (from pieces of the plant or underground roots), so survival of a population depends on seeds
- Seed dispersal is by gravity, water or small mammals



**Figure 4** Illustration of *Eriogonum pyrolifolium* by Jeanne R. Janish (Hitchcock et al. 1969)

# *Eriogonum pyrolifolium* var. *coryphaeum* (continued)

## DESCRIPTION

### General

- Perennial species that grows from a long taproot
- From 4 to 15 cm tall, with erect or arching leafless stems
- Several simple or branched stems, woody and cushion-like

### Leaves

- Leaves basal, growing outward in open rosettes
- Leaves distinctive, from 1.5 to 4 cm long with broadly oval to egg-shaped blades and narrow petioles, light green or green-yellow on upper surfaces, and grey-woolly beneath

### Flowers

- Flowers arranged in clusters at top of stems with two linear bracts, 10 to 20 mm long, under inflorescence
- Each cluster composed of numerous, bell-shaped involucre (bracts), each containing several perianths (undifferentiated petals and sepals)
- Perianths bell-shaped, 6-lobed, from 4 to 5 mm long, white to green-white, and soft woolly-hairy on outside
- Perianths turn red to pink following pollination

### Fruits

- Achenes light brown to brown, 4 to 5 mm long, with hairs at one end



**Figure 5** Typical plant showing flowers clustered at the end of leafless stems and basal leaves in rosettes

## IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- Characterized by large, distinctive leaves growing as open rosettes, and head-like flower clusters subtended by only two bracts (versus 4 to 6 in other species)
- Should not be easily confused with other plants in its alpine habitat



**Figure 6** Close-up of plant showing bell-shaped, white to green-white perianths and distinctive leaves with narrow petioles

## GENERAL THREATS AND GUIDANCE

- **Avoid development in areas with known occurrences of *Eriogonum pyrolifolium* through project relocation or redesign**
- Protect open, rocky sites in alpine and subalpine habitats from disturbance and development
- Follow provincial methods for when and how to conduct plant species at risk surveys
- Follow provincial policy and guidance on how to avoid, minimize, restore and offset impacts to plant species at risk and their habitats
- Report any sightings to the BC Conservation Data Centre ([cdccdata@gov.bc.ca](mailto:cdccdata@gov.bc.ca)) and FLNR Ecosystems Section ([josie.symonds@gov.bc.ca](mailto:josie.symonds@gov.bc.ca))

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