

Pale Evening-primrose (*Oenothera pallida* ssp. *pallida*)

Onagraceae (Evening Primrose Family)

RANGE

- Occurs in North America from British Columbia south through the western United States to Texas, not reported as native in California
- In B.C., there are six extant sites in the south Okanagan and one historic record from Pemberton (possibly an introduction)

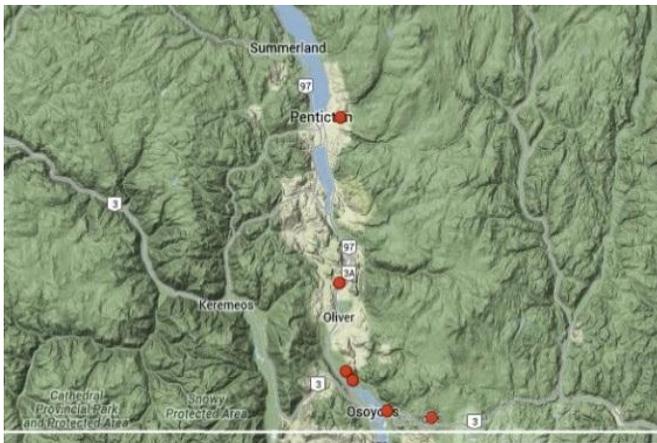


Figure 1 Thompson Okanagan Region distribution of *Oenothera pallida* (adapted from BC CDC 2014)

HABITAT

- In the Okanagan, occurs on sandy, open ground, usually in full sun with little competing vegetation in the Bunchgrass Biogeoclimatic Zone
- Associates include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), antelope-brush (*Purshia tridentata*), prairie sagewort (*Artemisia frigida*), showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), red three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*) and cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*)



Figure 2 Sandy, open slope habitat north of Oliver, B.C.



Figure 3 Sandy roadside habitat west of Osoyoos, B.C.

LIFE HISTORY

- Perennial evening-primrose over-wintering from a below ground rhizome
- Flowers in the late spring and early summer, with the flowers opening in the evening
- Flowers turn pink after pollination and develop into capsules containing numerous seeds

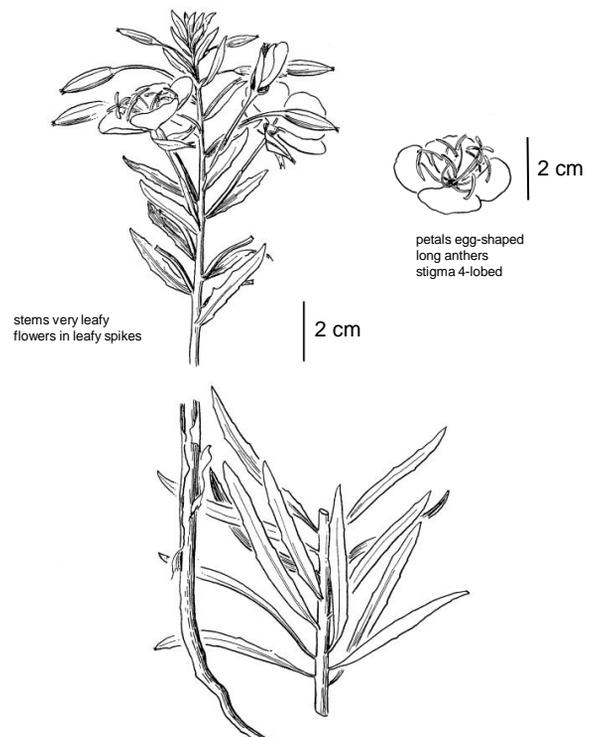


Figure 4 Illustration of *O. pallida* ssp. *pallida* by Jeanne R. Janish (Hitchcock et al. 1969)

Oenothera pallida ssp. *pallida* (continued)

DESCRIPTION

General

- Perennial herb from a rhizome (underground stem)
- Stems very leafy, 10 to 50 cm tall, simple to branched at base, glabrous to grey stiff-hairy

Leaves

- Leaves linear to linear lanceolate, 2 to 8 cm long, 5 (10) mm wide, entire to weakly toothed

Flowers

- Usually many, long-stalked, fragrant flowers in leafy spikes, the buds nodding, hypanthium 1.5 to 3.5 cm long, usually pink to purplish
- Petals egg-shaped, 1.5 to 3 cm long, tips rounded to slightly notched, white, aging to pink
- Sepals 1 to 2 cm long, mostly joined
- Stamens about as long as petals, anthers 6 to 10 mm long
- Styles about equaling petals in length, stigma lobes 4, linear, 4 to 6 mm long

Fruits

- 4-parted linear capsules, 1.5 to 3.5 cm long



Figure 5 Close-up of showy white flowers with four-lobed stigma

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- The tufted perennial habit and showy white flowers distinguish this species from other evening-primrose species in B.C.
- Scarlet gaura (*Gaura coccinea*), another member of the evening-primrose family, is the closest in appearance to *Oenothera pallida* ssp. *pallida* and can be distinguished by its smaller flowers in a dense terminal spike, and long stamens and styles that surpass length of petals



Figure 6 A shorter more densely tufted plant in native habitat

GENERAL THREATS AND GUIDANCE

- **Avoid development in areas with known occurrences of *Oenothera pallida* through project relocation or redesign**
- Protect open, sandy expanses from disturbance and development, including exclusion of livestock and ATVs through fencing and/or signage, and consider restoration including invasive plant removal following professional advice
- Ensure roadside maintenance activities do not disturb this species and its habitat
- 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 B.C. Conservation Data Centre (cdccdata@gov.bc.ca) and FLNR Ecosystems Section (josie.symonds@gov.bc.ca)

REFERENCES

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2013. <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
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