

Branched Phacelia (*Phacelia ramosissima* var. *ramosissima*)

Hydrophyllaceae (Waterleaf Family)

RANGE

- Found in North America from extreme south-central British Columbia south through Washington, Idaho and Oregon to Arizona, Nevada and California (USA)
- In B.C., known only from the lower slopes of Mount Kruger, west of Osoyoos



Figure 1 B.C. distribution of *Phacelia ramosissima* (BC CDC 2014)

HABITAT

- Found along narrow, shaded to semi-shaded bands (1 to 3 m wide) of talus and rock debris below cliffs and rock outcrops, as well as on outcrop ledges, within relatively stationary vegetated (usually shrubby) pockets in the Bunchgrass, Ponderosa Pine and Interior Douglas-fir Biogeoclimatic Zones
- Associates include saskatoon (*Amelanchier cusickii*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), antelope-brush (*Purshia tridentata*) and Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*); often found in association with blue-listed thick-leaved thelypody (*Thelypodium laciniatum* var. *laciniatum*)



Figure 2 Rocky talus habitat near Osoyoos, B.C.



Figure 3 Typical habitat on a ledge at the base of a rock outcrop; shown growing with blue-listed *Thelypodium laciniatum*

LIFE HISTORY

- Perennial species that flowers from May into July, often forming extensive, sprawling patches
- Does not reproduce vegetatively, so survival of a population depends on seeds and seed bank
- Annually produces large numbers of viable seeds with a high germination rate, so colonization of open areas via seed likely occurs

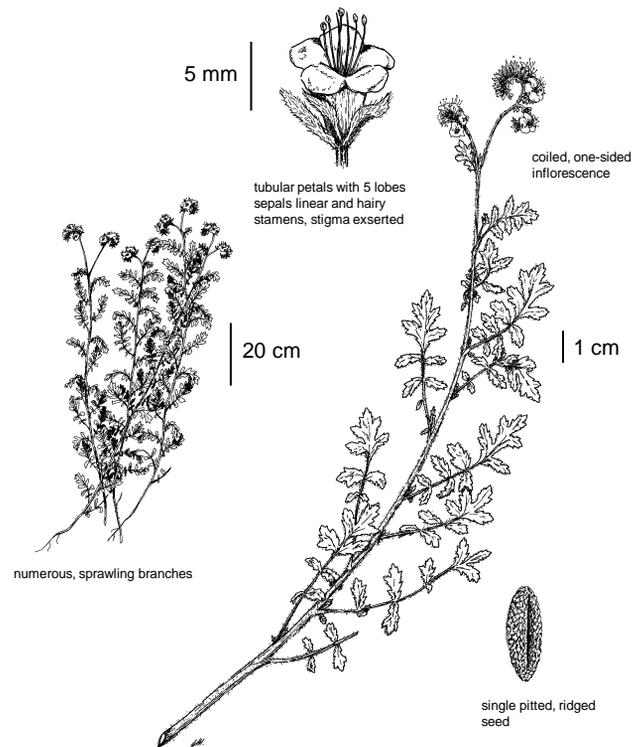


Figure 4 Illustration of *Phacelia ramosissima* (Douglas et al. 1999)

Phacelia ramosissima var. *ramosissima* (continued)

DESCRIPTION

General

- Perennial plant that grows from a long taproot
- Numerous stems, simple or branched, 0.5 to 1.5 m long, that are ascending or prostrate, giving the plant a sprawling appearance
- Stems and leaves glandular-hairy and strongly scented

Leaves

- Leaves numerous; arranged alternately on the stem
- Leaves 10 to 20 cm long, widest above the middle, and composed of numerous toothed leaflets

Flowers

- Flowers densely clustered at ends of stems in series of coiled, one-sided and narrow inflorescences
- Petals lavender or pale cream (rarely white) and fused at base, forming a tube that opens into 5 lobes
- Stamens and stigma exert (protrude) beyond petals
- Sepals linear and hairy, surrounding base of flowers

Fruits

- Capsules contain 2 to 4 pitted and ridged seeds, each 2 to 3 mm long



Figure 5 Typical plant showing numerous ascending and prostrate stems, numerous alternate leaves and sprawling appearance

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- Characterized by its numerous, sprawling branches (which are sticky due to abundance of glandular hairs) and by its coiled, one-sided narrow inflorescences composed of numerous, usually lavender flowers
- Should not be confused with any other plant species in its habitat
- Silverleaf phacelia (*Phacelia hastata*) overlaps in range with *P. ramosissima*, but usually grows in more open areas and is distinguished by its simple, lanceolate, entire (sometimes basally lobed), greyish leaves, and its generally paler flower colour



Figure 6 Close-up of flower showing stamens and stigma exerting beyond 5-lobed petals, and glandular hairy appearance

GENERAL THREATS AND GUIDANCE

- **Avoid development in areas with known occurrences of *Phacelia ramosissima* through project relocation or redesign**
- Protect shrub-steppe and open forest habitats, particularly talus slopes and rocky outcrops, 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 B.C. Conservation Data Centre (cdccdata@gov.bc.ca) and FLNR Ecosystems Section (josie.symonds@gov.bc.ca)

REFERENCES

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2014. <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
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