

Toothcup meadow-foam (*Rotala ramosior*)

Lythraceae (Loosestrife Family)

Status: Red / Endangered ■
 Best Survey Time: Jul to Sep ■
 General Habitat: Foreshore ■

RANGE

- Found in North America from British Columbia, Ontario (where it is also rare) and throughout most of the continental USA
- In B.C., known from Kamloops, Summerland and two locations in the vicinity of Osoyoos

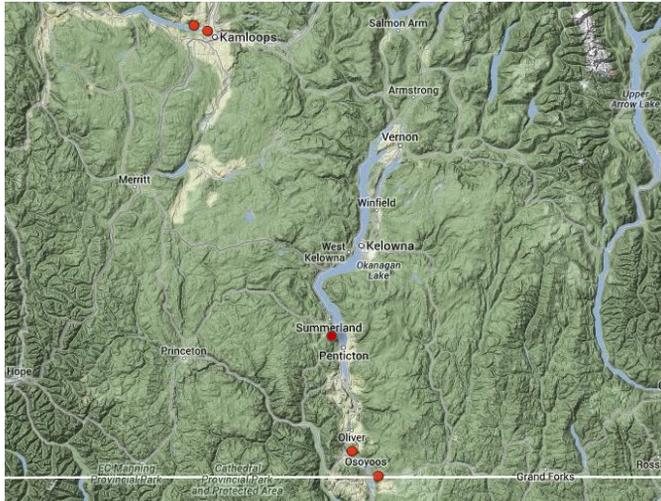


Figure 1 B.C. distribution of *Rotala ramosior* (adapted from BC CDC 2013)

HABITAT

- Open to semi-shaded, usually sandy, swales and flats with seasonally wet soils in riparian habitats in the Bunchgrass Biogeoclimatic Zone
- Also found in mudflats along lakeshores, receded pond margins and sandy backwater river channels
- Associates include spike-rushes (*Eleocharis* spp.) sedges (*Carex* spp.), hairy water-clover (*Marsilea vestita*), common witchgrass (*Panicum capillare*) and awned cyperus (*Cyperus squarrosus*)



Figure 2 Seasonally flooded mudflat habitat near Osoyoos, B.C.



Figure 3 Seasonally flooded habitat near Kamloops, B.C.

LIFE HISTORY

- Annual species that grows each year from seed, germinating following water drawdown in June or July, and flowering from summer to early autumn
- Fruiting occurs from August into October, plants die following first frosts, and seeds are released into seed bank when capsules dry and split open
- Does not reproduce vegetatively, so population survival depends on seeds and seed bank
- Seed dispersal by water, waterfowl or small mammals
- May be subject to annual population fluctuations due to varying environmental conditions

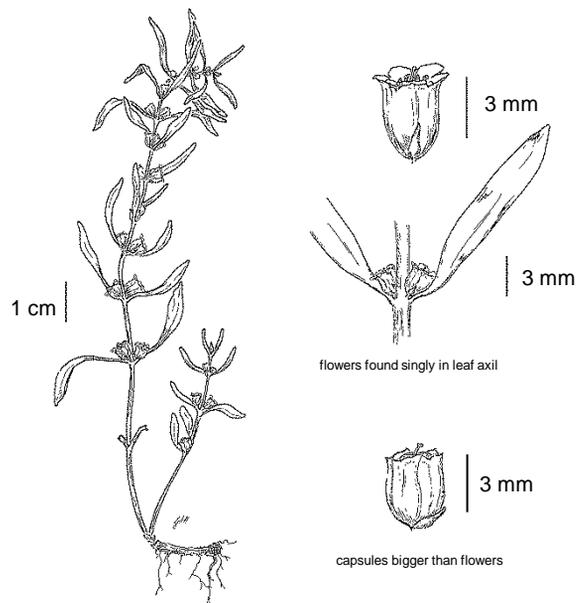


Figure 4 Illustration of *Rotala ramosior* (Douglas et al. 1999)

Rotala ramosior (continued)

DESCRIPTION

General

- Small, hairless, annual herb
- Stems usually erect or somewhat decumbent, often branched near their bases
- From 5 to 15 cm tall from a small fibrous root

Leaves

- Leaves arranged in opposite pairs along stem
- Leaves smooth edged, lanceolate or oblanceolate, from 1.5 to 3 cm long, tapering towards stem to form a short stalk or petiole
- Basal leaves absent at maturity

Flowers

- Flowers tightly arranged in the leaf, with usually one flower per axil, 1.5 to 2.5 mm long and bell-shaped
- Petals 1 mm long, usually pale lavender to nearly white
- Stamens and styles short, not exerted from corolla

Fruits

- Elliptic 4-chambered capsules, larger than the flowers and almost round at maturity, 3 mm long



Figure 5 Typical plant showing both flowers and capsules

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- Characterized by its small stature, short-stalked non-clasping leaves, and often singular flowers tightly arranged in the leaf axils
- May be confused with scarlet ammannia (*Ammannia robusta*), a related but generally taller plant of similar habitats with clasping unstalked leaves, generally more than one flower in each leaf axil, and styles that are slightly exerted beyond the calyx
- European water-purslane (*Lythrum portula*) has decumbent stems that root at nodes, broadly oblong leaves and long calyx lobes that surpass corolla



Figure 6 Small plants with developed capsules in the leaf axils

GENERAL THREATS AND GUIDANCE

- **Avoid development in areas with known occurrences of *Rotala ramosior* through project relocation or redesign**
- Protect seasonally flooded riparian habitat 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
- 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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