

Showy Phlox (*Phlox speciosa* ssp. *occidentalis*)

Polemoniaceae (Phlox Family)

RANGE

- Found in North America in California, Oregon, Washington (USA) and southern British Columbia
- In B.C., known only from a small area north of Keremeos and historically from a site in the mountains near Skaha Lake

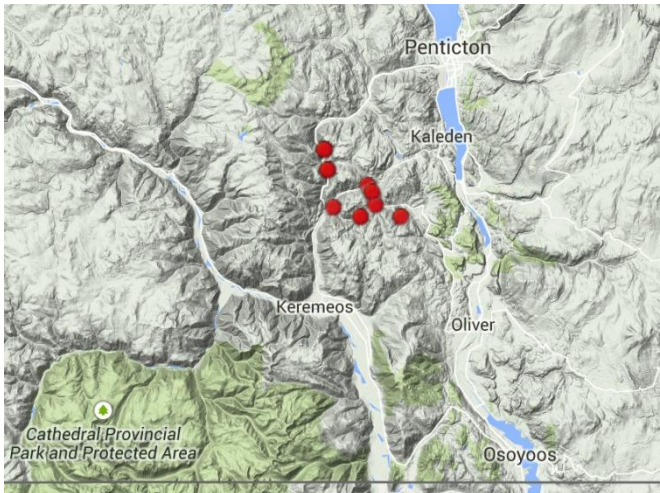


Figure 1 B.C. distribution of *Phlox speciosa* ssp. *occidentalis* (adapted from BC CDC 2014)

HABITAT

- Hot, dry grasslands and sagebrush steppe in the Interior Douglas fir, Ponderosa Pine and Bunchgrass Biogeoclimatic Zones
- Associates include big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), slender hawksbeard (*Crepis atribarba*), long-leaved phlox (*Phlox longifolia*) and silky lupine (*Lupinus sericeus*)



Figure 2 Sagebrush habitat near White Lake, B.C.



Figure 3 Sagebrush steppe habitat near Twin Lakes, north of Keremeos, B.C.

LIFE HISTORY

- Perennial species that flowers during May and early June
- Mature capsules split open in the late summer, releasing their seeds at the base of existing plants
- In the late fall, plants die back and overwinter as a woody caudices (short, persistent stems below the ground surface)

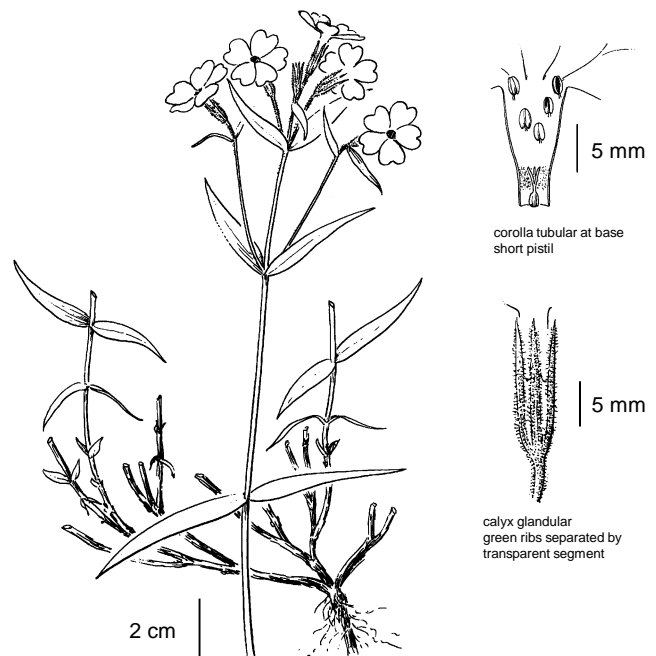


Figure 4 Illustration of *Phlox speciosa* ssp. *occidentalis* by Jeanne R. Janish (Hitchcock et al. 1969)

Phlox speciosa ssp. *occidentalis* (continued)

DESCRIPTION

General

- Perennial from a woody stem base and taproot
- Stems erect to ascending, glandular hairy in the inflorescence, 15 to 45 cm tall

Leaves

- Leaves opposite, linear to narrowly lanceolate up to 7 cm long and 1 cm wide

Flowers

- Inflorescence of loose, terminal clusters of short-stalked flowers
- Corolla (fused petals) lobes pink, prominently notched at tip, 1 to 1.5 cm long, tube of corolla about as long as separated lobes at top
- Calyx (sepals) glandular with 5 green ribs separated by transparent segments
- Styles short, 0.5 to 2 mm long, stigmas longer than the style

Fruits

- Capsules, 3-chambered, with few seeds



Figure 5 Close-up of open flower clusters with characteristic notched corolla lobes

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

- In B.C., long-leaved phlox (*Phlox longifolia*) is the only species with similar range and habitat likely to be confused with showy phlox
- While occasionally found with notched corolla lobes, *Phlox longifolia* differs from *Phlox speciosa* in having a longer style (6 to 15 mm) that is much longer than its stigma lobes, a calyx that lacks glandular hairs, and leaves that are usually firmer and narrower



Figure 6 Comparison between *Phlox speciosa* (left) with a short style and long stigmas and *Phlox longifolia* (right) with a long style and short stigmas

GENERAL THREATS AND GUIDANCE

- **Avoid development in areas with known occurrences of *Phlox speciosa* ssp. *occidentalis* through project relocation or redesign**
- Protect upland habitats from disturbance and development, including excessive cattle grazing
- Further study and monitoring is required to assess long-term population trends within the province
- 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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