

Rare Plant Status Review:

Amsinckia douglasiana

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Information in blue text has been added since the status review was first sent out

Amsinckia douglasiana is an annual herb in the Boraginaceae that is known in California from approximately 6 counties with about 50 documented occurrences. If one looks on the Consortium of CA Herbaria, this species has specimens identified to it from 23 counties; however, personal communications with Ron Kelley (*The Jepson Manual* author for *Amsinckia*) reveal that this species is endemic to Monterey shale substrates in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. The other specimen identifications of *A. douglasiana* from the Great Valley and Sierra Nevada area (such as Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, and Tulare Counties) were likely misidentified due to confusion over the differences between *A. intermedia* and *A. douglasiana*. Identifications of *A. douglasiana* from the East Bay area are most likely *A. tessellata*. CNPS and CNDDDB have left in the distribution list for *A. douglasiana* occurrences from Ventura County, Kern County, and San Benito County as these occurrences seem like reasonable extensions of the species known range of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. However, these counties will be removed if we received information/comments that suggest specimens collected from these counties are misidentifications. All occurrences outside of Kern, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties are assumed to be misidentifications.

The majority of collections for this species were made in the 1930s through the 1960's with few current collections. This species is considered endemic to California; however, there has been a reported non-native population in Maine (See NatureServe website). *A. douglasiana* occurs in valley and foothill grasslands, as well as oak woodlands, on loose shaly slopes (endemic to Monterey shale).

While it is mentioned in The Jepson Manual (1993) as being uncommon, it appears that this species may be too common for inclusion in the CNPS Inventory. The field notes section of "A Flora of California", Jepson 1943, states that *A. douglasiana* is...

"Scattered here and there at intervals, stations for *A. douglasiana* are frequent in the Salinas Valley and its neighboring canons. As one travels southeasterly, it becomes more common. On the west side of the Cholame Valley in eastern San Luis Obispo County, the vernal landscape is largely dominated by its yellow flowers, and in Palo Prieto Canon also it colors widely the hills. About "Grant Lake" in Palo Prieto Pass, one may find a large colony, while southward still, from the Yeguas Hills (which lie about north of Yeguas Peak) to the Carrizo Plain, colonies of five hundred acres cover, here and there, the barren hills in April. The Yeguas district appears to be the center of distribution of this species."

This species is present in many regional floras which help us to get an idea as to how common this plant is. A Flora of Kern County (Twisselmann 1967) mentions that it is "abundant in the Temblor Range; common in the valley; occasional through the Douglas oak woodland in the Tehachapi Mountains, where it grows at elevations as high as 6400 feet on the high slopes south of Tejon Canyon." The Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County (Hoover 1970) mentions that this

species is “relatively rare, occurring as dense but small colonies at widely scattered places...It is somewhat more widespread in Monterey Co.”

Ron Kelley mentions that this species is endemic to Monterey shale but that it is also has many locations on private land which have not been surveyed and is very sensitive to good and bad years. *A. douglasiana* may cover a certain area in a good year but then be completely absent the next year if the weather is not as good. He also mentions that *A. douglasiana* likely does not experience as many threats as other species with similar distributions. This is because *A. douglasiana* occurs on a substrate which is difficult for many non-native plants to grow on.

A. douglasiana is currently known in California from about 48 documented occurrences from 6 counties. For this reason and other reasons stated above, CNPS and CNDDDB recommend that *A. douglasiana* not be added to the CNPS Inventory and the CNDDDB. However, some people think that List 4 is appropriate for this species and for this reason, *A. douglasiana* requires review for inclusion in both the CNPS Inventory and the CNDDDB.

Recommended Actions

Amsinckia douglasiana

CNPS- Add to List 4.2

CNDDDB- G3, S3.2

~~**Do Not Add to the CNPS Inventory or CNDDDB- Too Common**~~

If added to the CNPS Inventory, the proposed CNPS *Inventory* Record would be as follows:

***Amsinckia douglasiana* A. DC.**

Boraginaceae

Douglas' fiddleneck

List 4.2

Kern, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Ventura
Valley and foothill grasslands, oak woodlands / dry; 0-1950 meters.

Annual herb, blooms March-May

Possibly threatened by agriculture.