

Idahoa scapigera

English name scalepod

Scientific name *Idahoa scapigera*

Family Brassicaceae (mustard)

Other scientific names none

Risk status

BC: imperilled (S2); red-listed

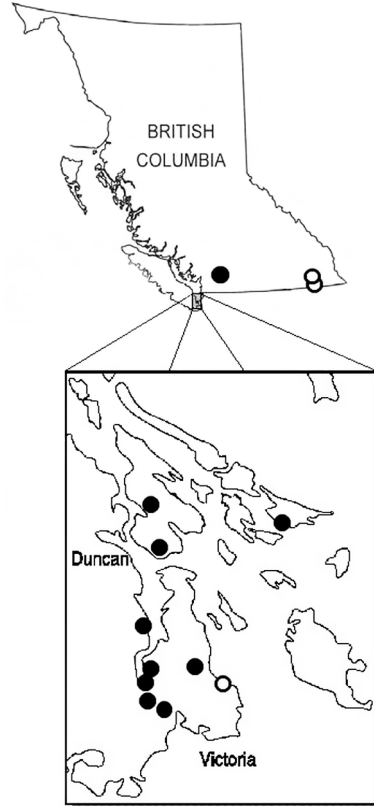
Canada: imperilled (N2); COSEWIC: not assessed

Global: secure (G5)

Elsewhere: Montana – critically imperilled (S1); California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington – reported (SNR)

Range/known distribution

Scalepod is found in western North America from California to southern British Columbia. In Canada, scalepod is known from 10 locations: southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and the southern interior of British Columbia. Although some of the populations are protected in regional parks on federal lands, many occur on privately owned land. At least three populations have been extirpated.



Distribution of *Idahoa scapigera*

● recently confirmed sites

○ unconfirmed or extirpated sites

Species at Risk in Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems in British Columbia



Idahoia scapigera

Field description

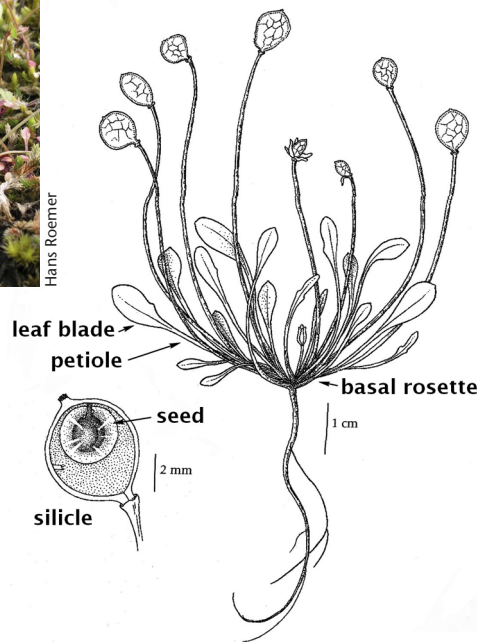
Scalegod is a **small annual** from a slender taproot. The leaves have long slender stalks (petioles) with egg-shaped blades (1-3 cm long) that are unlobed or with two lobes at the base. The leaves form a basal rosette. The **tiny, white, four-petaled flowers are found at the end of leafless stems** that are 3-13 cm high. The number of flowering stems ranges from 3-13. The **fruit are flattened, disk-like pods (silicles)** measuring 6-12 mm in diameter. There are 6-12 winged seeds inside each pod. Once the seeds are dispersed, the papery white inner membrane of the pod remains.

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

When in flower, scalegod bears a superficial resemblance to other early annuals in the mustard family, such as common draba (*Draba verna*), which is found in the same habitat and blooms at the same time. It is easier to accurately identify scalegod plants when their distinctive fruits mature. The long, leafless flowering stems with a single flattened, disk-like seedpod distinguish scalegod from other small mustards.



Idahoia scapigera



Idahoa scapigera

Life history

Scalegod blooms early in the year, usually from February to March depending on weather variation. Seed pods are usually produced in March or April. Although little is known about dispersal mechanisms, the winged seed may be carried by wind in addition to gravity. There are slight variations in the microsite distribution of the species depending on seasonal weather variations. There is no information on population dynamics, dispersal distance, seed viability, germination requirements or seedling survival rates.

Habitat

Scalegod is usually found in seepage areas that are moist in the spring and dry out completely in the summer. The plants occur in thin mossy soils over rock outcrops. The terrain is often flat benches in steep open bluffs that face south, west or east. Mosses including racomitrium (*Racomitrium* spp.) and red thread-moss (*Bryum miniatum*) are common. Associated plants include common sandweed (*Athysanus pusillus*), grassland saxifrage (*Saxifraga integrifolia*), Wallace's selaginella (*Selaginella wallacei*), rustyhair saxifrage (*Saxifraga rufidula*), monkey-flower (*Mimulus* spp.), common draba* (*Draba verna*) and the exotic annual grasses, early hairgrass* (*Aira praecox*) and silver hairgrass* (*A. caryophyllea*).

Why the species is at risk

Habitat loss due to urban development has destroyed much of the specialized habitat scalegod requires and may threaten the remaining sites on private property. The thin soils where scalegod grows are vulnerable to erosion from trampling by people and dogs, however most sites are too steep to be easily accessible. Although it is difficult for most exotic species to establish in the thin soils, habitat quality may be degraded if adjacent habitat is colonized by invasive plants. Changes to hydrology and disturbance from nesting geese may also threaten scalegod.



Idaho scapigera



What you can do to help this species

Management practices should be tailored to the specific circumstances at the site. Potential management tools will depend on the specific circumstances and may require experimentation prior to implementation.

Before taking any action, expert advice must be obtained and no action taken without it. Please refer to the introductory section of this manual.

Public and private landowners should be made aware of new populations of this species if they are discovered, and appropriate management practices suggested. Management needs include removal of adjacent invasive species and limiting access to sensitive habitat. Existing populations should be monitored on an ongoing basis to determine their viability, as well as for any negative impacts stemming from land development and weed encroachment.

References

B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2010. BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer. BC Ministry of Environment, Victoria, BC. Available: <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>

Douglas, G.W., G.B. Straley, D. Meidinger and J. Pojar (editors). 1998. Illustrated Flora of British Columbia. Volume 2: Dicotyledons (Balsaminaceae through Cuscutaceae). B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks and B.C. Ministry of Forests. Victoria. 401 pp.

For further information, contact the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team, or see the web site at: www.goert.ca

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*Refers to non-native species.

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