

## *Crassula connata* var. *connata*

**English name** erect pigmyweed

**Scientific name** *Crassula connata* var. *connata*

**Family** Crassulaceae (Crassula)

**Other scientific names** *Crassula erecta*; *Tillaea erecta*

**Risk status**

BC: imperilled (S2); red-listed

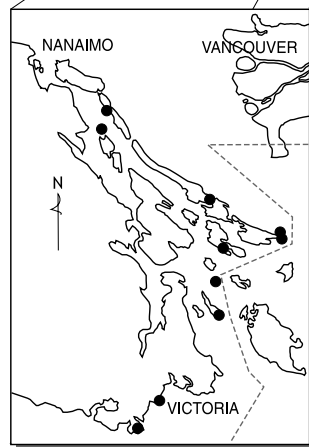
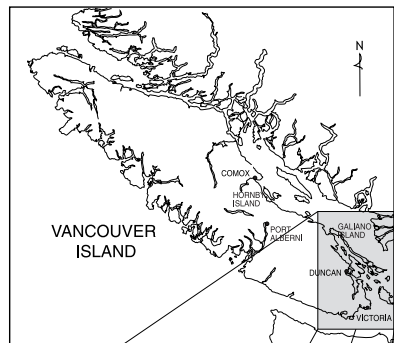
Canada: threatened (N2)

Global: secure (G5T?)

Elsewhere: California – not ranked (S?)

**Range/Known distribution**

Erect pigmyweed occurs in western North America, from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands (and San Juan Island in Washington) to southwest Oregon and northwest Arizona and California. It also occurs in Baja California, Mexico and Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina. Currently in British Columbia there are 10 occurrences and no unconfirmed historic localities.



Distribution of *Crassula connata* var. *connata*

● recently confirmed sites

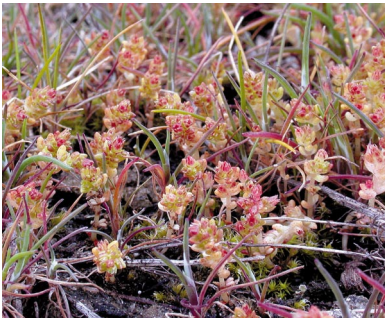
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### Field description

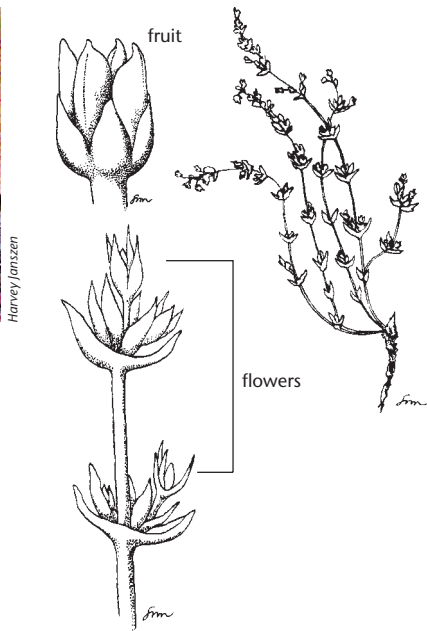
A low **greenish-white** annual herb that roots at the nodes. Stems are ascending or erect, **2-6 cm tall, freely branching, and aging to red**. Leaves are **opposite, entire** (untoothed), **succulent, glabrous** (smooth), oblong-to egg-shaped and **1.5-3 mm long**. **Flowers are borne in clusters** in the leaf axils. They are **4-parted**, greenish-white and short-stalked. Sepals are longer than the petals and are cup-shaped. The small fruit (less than 2 mm long) is a **follicle** (dry fruit that splits along one side) with one to two seeds.

### IDENTIFICATION TIPS

The small size, succulent leaves and greenish-white flowers distinguishes erect pigmyweed from other native succulent species such as stonecrops (*Sedum* spp.). *Crassula connata* differs from pigmyweed (*Crassula aquatica*) in having flowers arranged in clusters rather than singly. A Mediterranean species of *Crassula*, *Crassula tillaea*\*, which has been introduced to the region, has three sepals, not four.



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### **Life history**

Erect pigmyweed is an ephemeral winter annual. It requires winter and spring moisture to germinate and grow. The pollinators are unknown. Germination occurs as early as December and seed may disperse by water.

### **Habitat**

*Crassula connata* var. *connata* inhabits wet to moist vernal pools on coastal bluffs and on shallow soils along the margins of rock outcrops. Substrates vary from shale and shingle to sand and saline mud. Associated native herbaceous species include field parsley-piert (*Aphanes arvensis*), sea milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), gumweed (*Grindelia integrifolia*), Scouler's popcornflower (*Plagiobothrys scouleri*), sea plantain (*Plantago maritima* ssp. *juncooides*), alkaligrass (*Puccinellia* spp.), western pearlwort (*Sagina decumbens* ssp. *occidentalis*), coastal pearlwort (*Sagina maxima*), American glasswort (*Salicornia virginica*), broad-leaved stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*), Canada sand-spurry (*Spergularia canadensis*), red sand-spurry (*Spergularia rubra*), and seaside arrow-grass (*Triglochin maritima*). Elevations: 0-30 m. At the North Pender Island site, elevation is 130 metres and on Saturna Island the site is at 200 metres.

*C. connata* var. *connata* requires bare, open soil and full sun. It takes advantage of shallow, eroding soil margins on rocky outcrops where few other species grow. In its seasonally dry habitat, it is dependent on winter and spring moisture availability to complete its life cycle.

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### **Why the species is at risk**

The limited occurrence of the specific habitat of this species makes it vulnerable, particularly to residential waterfront development and trail building. Two sites are on private land and therefore remain unprotected.

### **What you can do to help this species**

Management practices should be tailored to the needs of 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.**

### **References:**

- Bywater, M., and G.E. Wickens. 1984. New world species of the genus *Crassula*. Kew Bull. 39:699-728.
- Moran, R. 1992. Pygmy weed (*Crassula connata*) in Western North America. Cactus and Succulent Journal 64(5):223-231.

For further information, contact the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team, or see the web site at: [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca).

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\*Refers to non-native species.