

HAYDEN (BLOWOUT) PENSTEMON (*Penstemon haydenii*)**Description**

Also known as Hayden's penstemon, blowout beardtongue, or blowout bluebell. A hairless perennial forb 1-2 foot tall characterized by very leafy stems with leaves being entire, sessile and clasping. The leaves are 3-5 inches long by 1-3 inches wide. The flowers appear in clusters with 4-6 pale to dark lavender flowers each. The flowers, themselves, are long and tubular, flaring into a two lobed upper lip and a three lobed lower lip. The flowers also have dark nectar lines and a sterile stamen with golden hairs near the tip. Each flower is opposite the axil of a spoon shaped sharp tipped leaf-like bract. The species flowers from mid May to late June and has a strong persistent fragrance that lures pollinators.

Distribution

This species is very rare and limited to a few populations in the Sandhills of Nebraska. Presently populations are known in Box Butte, Cherry, Garden, Grant, Hooker, Morrill, and Thomas counties.

Habitat

The blowout penstemon is found in the Sandhills of Nebraska in well-developed blowouts with active sand movement. The moving sand is needed to keep other plants from crowding out the penstemon.

Status

Global: G1-Critically Imperiled. Federally Endangered. State Endangered. Nebraska: S1-Critically Imperiled. Better range management by ranchers for livestock production as well as more wildfire control has resulted in fewer habitats available. Blowouts typically form over winter to early spring when snow cover is sparse.

Management

Recovery potential is high. "Disturbed" habitat (overgrazed or otherwise degraded) is actually preferred for colonization efforts. There are indications that artificial propagation and transplanting can be used to reintroduce populations in suitable areas. The identification of the plant and careful management of the area in which it is found is extremely important to rejuvenate this species. Active management of the site, including heavy grazing during periods when the penstemon is not growing may help to keep blowouts open. Establishment of new populations with greenhouse grown plants has become an integral part of blowout penstemon management.

More Information

<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?sPCODE=Q2EX>