

## Wolf's evening primrose (*Oenothera wolfii*)



### THREATENED



Flowers (left), habit (center), and habitat (right) of Wolf's evening primrose. Photos by ODA staff. If downloading images from this website, please credit the photographer.

### Family

Onagraceae

### Plant description

Erect, branching biennial to short-lived perennial, 5-15 dm tall, with greenish or red stems covered with stiff hairs. Plants form a basal rosette with elliptical leaves in the first year, and typically bolt and flower the following year. Flowers are pale yellow to yellow and are usually less than 4 cm in diameter. Sepals and fruits are often red-tinged and pubescent.

### Distinguishing characteristics

*Oenothera wolfii* is the only native species of this genus occurring on the southern Oregon coast. However, *O. glazioviana*, a garden escapee, has naturalized on the California coast and it is possible that this non-native has made its way up to Oregon. The two species are very similar in appearance. *Oenothera glazioviana* is often slightly larger than *O. wolfii*, with flowers reaching 5 cm in diameter. Flower petals are often overlapping, and *O. glazioviana* stems are covered with long, spreading hairs with red, blister-like bases.

### Habitat

Well-drained sandy soil in coastal strands, roadsides and coastal bluffs. Native species associated with Wolf's evening primrose include *Abronia latifolia*, *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora*, *Achillea millefolium*, *Anaphalis margaritacea*, *Baccharis pilularis*, *Elymus mollis*, *Equisetum arvense*, *Fragaria chiloensis*, *Garrya elliptica*, *Gaultheria shallon*, *Lonicera involucrata*, *Lupinus* sp., *Mimulus guttatus*, *Phacelia argentea*, *Picea sitchensis*, *Polygonum paronychia*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rubus spectabilis*, and *Salix hookeriana*. Non-native species found in Wolf's evening primrose habitat include *Ammophila arenaria*, *Cytisus scoparius*, *Daucus carota*, and *Lotus corniculatus*.

### Range

Southern Oregon and northern California coast.

**Oregon counties**

Curry

**Federal status**

Species of Concern

**Threats**

Habitat loss and degradation due to development, dune stabilization, road construction/maintenance, and non-native invasive plants. Also threatened by hybridization with the non-native *Oenothera glazioviana*.

**Did you know?**

The genus *Oenothera* has many culinary and medical uses. Leaves and stems are mucilaginous and can be made into a tea for sore throats and coughs. Salves made from *Oenothera* species have been used topically to reduce swelling. In addition, certain species of evening primrose are grown as a new, high value oilseed crop, capable of replacing whale oil.

**Current/Recent ODA projects**

Wolf's evening primrose recovery efforts

**References**

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