**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**


ORNHIC (Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center). 2003. Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center Database. Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center, Portland, Oregon.