

Clustered broomrape

Scientific name: ***Orobanche fasciculata* Nutt.**

Common names: Clustered broomrape, Cluster cancerroot, Broomrape, Burro-weed strangler

This is a surprisingly fun little plant to find. Clustered broomrape is somewhat cryptic and is not always recognized as a flowering plant because of its color and small stature.

This plant is an obligate parasite, meaning it has no chlorophyll and depends completely on a host plant for water and carbohydrates.

Although not necessarily found tucked up close to a host plant, most often in Wyoming Clustered broomrape is parasitic on the roots of sagebrush.

The stem and small scale-like leaves of this plant do not appear above ground. Fleshy purplish flowering stocks emerge, seemingly out of nowhere, to produce pinkish purple to yellow tubular flowers. Up to 12 flowering stocks, 7-24 cm tall, can appear in a cluster and remain above ground only while the flowers develop and the seeds set from late May to mid-summer.

Clustered broomrape is widespread in the West but is never found growing abundantly in an area. Small clusters can be found growing singularly throughout the summer in well drained loose sandy areas in sagebrush and juniper communities.

