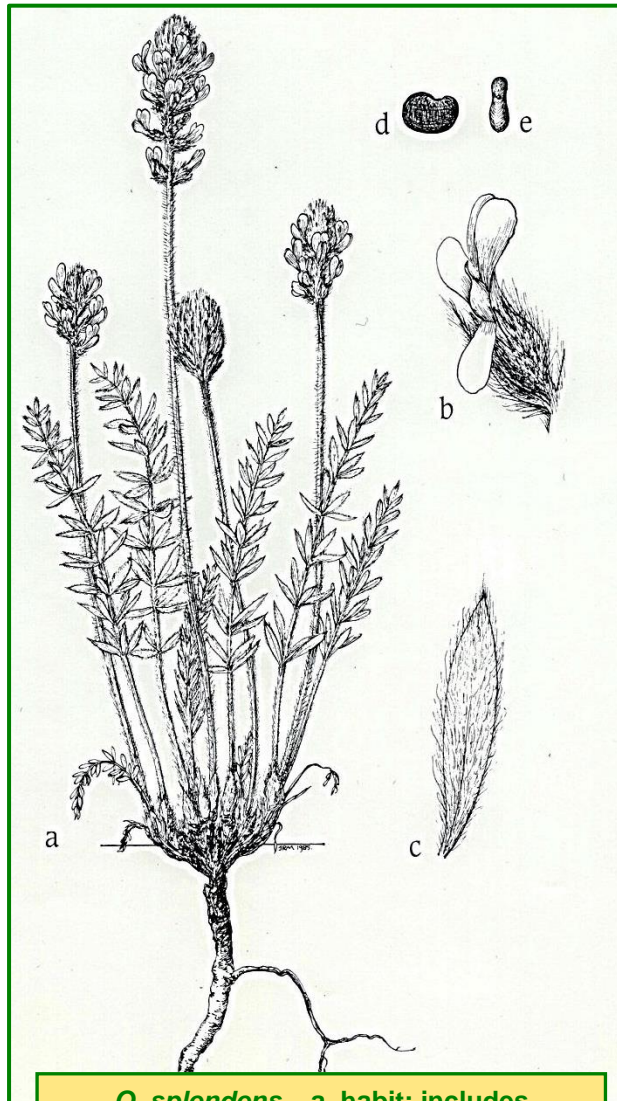


**Scientific Name:** *Oxytropis splendens* Dougl. ex Hook

**Family:** *Fabaceae*

**Common Names:** showy crazyweed, showy locoweed, showy pointvetch



***O. splendens* – a. habit: includes inflorescence, leaves flower and roots  
b. flower c. leaflets d-e. seeds**

**Plant Description**

Perennial densely hairy silvery plant from a branched caudex and thick taproot; leaves pinnate, with leaflets arising in whorls of 3 to 4; inflorescence is a dense,

hairy raceme, with 12 to 35 flowers bluish to reddish purple drying to violet (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Fruit:** Pods ovoid, 10 to 17 mm long, short beaked, densely hairy silver, with a deep groove below (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Seed:** Kidney shaped 2 to 2.5 mm long, dark brown to black (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Habitat and Distribution**

Grassy slopes, open woods, gravelly river flats, banks and roadsides (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Soil:** Does well in medium to coarse textures soils



***O. splendens* growing on a rocky slope**

with pH ranging from 6.1 to 7.4 (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Distribution:** Widely distributed in the mountains and foothills in Alberta. Alaska, Yukon, District of Mackenzie, to Lake Superior, south to southeastern British Columbia, New Mexico, North Dakota, northern Minnesota (Moss 1983).



*O. splendens* in flower

### Phenology

Perennial can live 3 to 5 years; flowers from late June to August and September. In cultivation, flowers bloom more than once: first in mid-June to mid-August and the second late August to October (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

### Pollination

Insects (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

### Seed Dispersal

Pods dehisce, scattering seed a few metres.

### Genetics

$2n=16$  (Moss 1983).

### Symbiosis

Actively mycorrhizal in prairie grasslands with vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae and rhizobial (nitrogen fixing) bacteria (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

### Seed Processing

**Collection:** Expect the first significant seed crop in the second year after cultivation. Direct combine. For small lots and wild harvest; cut, bag, hang or spread to dry and thresh (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Seed Weight:** 1.30 g/1,000 seeds (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Fruit/Seed by Weight:** 770 seeds/g (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Harvest Dates:** Late July to early August (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Cleaning:** Remove leafy material with a coarse screen, use a top screen 1/15" round screen and a bottom screen 6 x 26 mesh (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Storage Behaviour:** Orthodox; dry seed to low relative humidity prior to frozen storage (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew 2008).

**Storage:** Cool dry conditions (Winslow 2002).

**Longevity:** Reported to remain viable after 5 to 7 years (Winslow 2002).

### Propagation

**Natural Regeneration:** By seed (USDA NRCS n.d.).

**Germination:** 100% in 3 to 8 days with pre-treatment, 5 to 10% without pre-treatment (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Pre-treatment:** Scarification (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

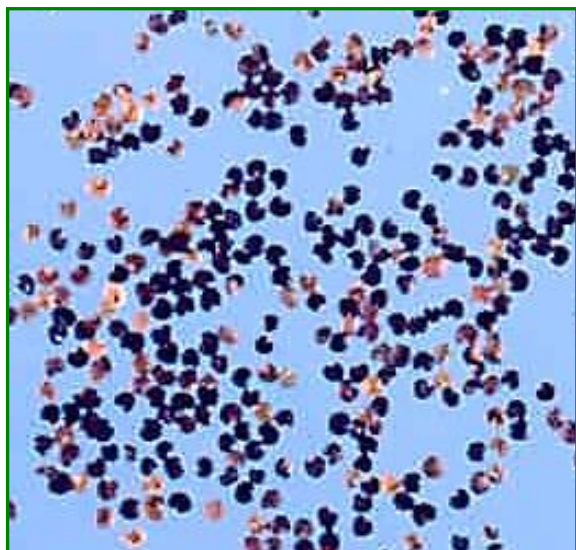
**Direct Seeding:** Plant seed in the spring at a depth of 0.6 cm, row cropping recommended (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Seed Rate:** 175 to 200 seeds per linear metre row (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Vegetative Propagation:** Not propagated vegetatively (USDA NRCS n.d.).

### Aboriginal/Food Uses

*Oxytropis sp.* contains toxic alkaloids as well as taking up selenium making them a poor food species (Mackinnon et al. 2009).



*O. splendens* seeds

### Wildlife/Forage Usage

**Wildlife:** Is lightly browsed by elk (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

**Livestock:** Poor (Tannas 1997).

**Grazing Response:** Increaser (Tannas 1997).

### Reclamation Potential

An early colonizer of disturbed gravel areas; colonizes disturbed sites and unamended coal spoils in the Rocky Mountains (Pahl and Smreciu 1999). Ideal for reclamation sites due to its ability to fix nitrogen.

### Commercial Resources

**Availability:** Available at few nurseries in Alberta (ANPC 2010).

**Cultivars:** None (Pahl and Smreciu 1999).

### Notes

Synonym *Astragalus splendens* (USDA NRCS n.d.).

### Photo Credits

**Photos 1, 2 & 3:** Wild Rose Consulting Inc., 2011.

**Line Diagram:** John Maywood, used by permission of Bruce Peel Special Collections, University of Alberta.

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