Photo by Ronald J. Taylor

Common lomatium (*Lomatium utriculatum*)

Additional common names describing lomatium include called hog fennel[1], spring gold, fineleaf desert-parsley, and bladder desert-parsley.

Edible uses include eating the root raw or cooked. The root can also be dried and ground into a powder or roasted as a vegetable. Young leaves and shoots can be eaten raw or cooked as greens.[2], [3]

A wide variety of bees, flies, wasps and beetles visit the flowers of *Lomatium spp*. and are likely pollinators.

Range

British Columbia south to California west of Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada[4]

Climate, elevation

Common lomatium grows in diverse climates, ranging from the cool, humid conditions near the coast to hot, dry environments in inland valleys and foothill woodlands. It can tolerate rainfall 40 to 70 [cm] at the desert edge and can be found growing in elevations up to 4500' [1]

Local occurrence

Open grasslands in northern and southern portions of the Puget Lowland and the adjacent Georgia Depression of B.C.[5]

Habitat preferences

Common lomatium can be found growing in open grassy slopes, meadows, and woodlands[6], particularly in prairies and rocky slopes west of the Cascades. It can also be

found west of the Sierras in Central Oak Woodland, and Coastal Sage Scrub plant communities.[1]

Plant strategy
Early successional

Associated species
Puget Sound prairies species associated with common lomatium include houndstongue hawkweed (*Hieracium cynoglossoides*), cutleaf microseris (*Microseris laciniata*), spike goldenrod (*Solidago spathulata*), white-top aster (*Aster curtus*), and prairie lupine (*Lupinus lepidus*). Long-stolon sedge (*Carex pensylvania*), field woodruch (*Luzula campestris*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), danthonia (*Danthonia californica*) and common camas (*Camassia quamash*).[5]

Collected as seed

Collection restrictions or guidelines
Collect seed heads and allow them to air dry indoors for at least a week before cleaning. Crush the heads with a rolling pin to remove seeds from small pods, separate the chaff from seed.

Seed germination
Seeds are best sown as soon as it is ripe in a cold frame. Stored seed can be rather slow to germinate, when sown in the spring it usually takes 12 weeks to germinate. Giving it a period of cold stratification might reduce this time. For cold stratification place seeds on moistened blotter paper, cover with second moistened piece of paper, place in zip-lock plastic sandwich bag and seal. Place bags in dark cold room for 12 weeks.[7]

Seed life
Lomatium likely has a short seed life. Kaye (1992) found that *Lomatium bradshawii* does not reproduce vegetatively or maintain a persistent soil seed bank (most seeds germinate the year after they fall, leaving few for remaining years). However, germination trials at Berry Botanical Gardens included one and 13 year old seeds subjected to 8 weeks of cold stratification followed by alternating 50/68°F (10/20°C) both germinated at a rate of 80%, while a constant 68° F (20°C) resulted in 70% and 50% respectively. After 16 weeks cold stratification, one and 13 year old accessions yielded 70% and 90% germination respectively when subjected to the alternating temperature treatment, and 100% and 90% respectively at the constant temperature.[8]

Recommended seed storage conditions
Cold store dry seeds in a sealed container

Propagation recommendations
Sow seeds in black plastic flats lined with newspaper, spacing seeds approximately 4.5cm x 4 cm apart. Lomatium seedlings should be watered 3-7 times per week in order to keep peat moist. Fertilize seedlings every-other-week, beginning several weeks after germination (e.g. two-hundred parts per million Peter's Peat-lie Special fertilizer).[7]

Soil or medium requirements
Use peat medium such as Terra-Lite Redi-Earth[7]

Installation form
The seedlings need to be pricked out into individual pots as soon as they are large enough to handle, and should be planted out into their permanent positions in the summer. Fresh seed can be sown immediately in situ. Division may be possible in spring or autumn.[9]

Recommended planting

Plant mid-March in full sun, in a well drained soil.[10]

Care requirements after installed
Water daily, with restricted water as plants mature.

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan
Moderate lifespan, up to 30 cm tall

Data compiled by Amy Lambert, May 21, 2003

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[1] Calflora database: http://www.calflora.net/bloomingplants/hogfennel.html
[2] Tanaka, T 1976. Tanaka's Cyclopedia of Edible Plants of the world. Keigaku Publishing
[3] Facciola, S. 1990. A Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications
[4] Pojar, Jim and Andy MacKinnon, 1994. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Lone Pine Publishing, Vancouver, Canada
[5] Chappell, Chris 2000. Puget-Georigia-Willamette Ecoregion Herbaceous Balds and Bluffs. Unpublished data
[6] Plant garden database: http://plants.gardenbed.com/
[7] Keeley, M. 2000. A study in urban revegetation : germination and establishment of South Puget Sound prairie species on a capped landfill; MS thesis
[8] Kaye, T. N. 1992. Bradshaw's Desert-Parsley: Population Monitoring and Pollination Biology. Kalmiopsis 2: 1-4. Center for Plant Conservation; http://ridgwaydb.mobot.org/cpcweb/CPC_ViewProfile.asp?CPCNum=2658
[9] Brickell, C. 1990. The RHS Gardener's Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers; Dorling Kindersley Publishers Ltd.
[10] Rock garden database: http://web.kadel.cz/flora/kvSearch.html