

## Threats

Threats to remaining populations of peacock larkspur include:

- urban expansion
- agricultural development
- herbicide use
- encroachment of invasive roadside weeds and woody plants.



## Habitat Conservation Plan

In spring of 2006, Benton County received a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

This project will allow the County to:

- increase conservation and restoration opportunities on County and other lands
- provide long-term protection of sensitive species and habitats
- develop a more economical and ecological approach to species conservation and mitigation

The HCP will cover rare and endangered prairie species including peacock larkspur and will describe activities that are likely to harm these species, the steps that will be taken to avoid, minimize and mitigate for such impacts, along with monitoring and adaptive management strategies.

The public is encouraged to participate in the planning process which should be completed in 2009.

## What to do if you find this species

For more information or to report peacock larkspur sightings, contact one of the following:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office  
 (503) 231-6179

or

Institute for Applied Ecology  
 563 SW Jefferson Ave.  
 Corvallis, Oregon 97333  
 (541) 753-3099

For information about the Benton County Prairie Species Habitat Conservation Plan please visit:

[www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp](http://www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp)

Cover photo of peacock larkspur and all other photos by Lori Wisehart unless noted otherwise.



Benton County:

**At Your Service**  
 Every Day

*This brochure was developed by Institute for Applied Ecology for Benton County.*

# Peacock larkspur

*(Delphinium pavonaceum)*



# Peacock larkspur



## Status

Peacock larkspur is listed as Endangered under the Oregon Endangered Species Act, and is a Federal Species of Concern.

## Description

Peacock larkspur is a perennial flowering plant in the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). The plants tend to be 15-30 inches tall, and have flowers that are white with dark blue centers. Flowers are produced in April through early July. Peacock larkspur reproduces only by seed. Seedlings germinate in winter but may take up to five years to flower.

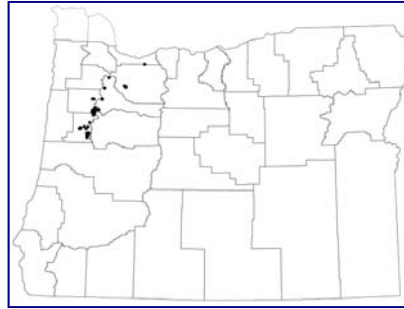
Peacock larkspur can be easily distinguished from the more common field larkspur (*Delphinium menziesii*) which has entirely blue flowers, although the two species can hybridize.



(L) Peacock larkspur (R) field larkspur.

## Habitat and Range

Peacock larkspur occurs only in the Willamette Valley. It is currently found primarily in Benton, Marion and Polk Counties. Only 18 occurrences



Distribution of peacock larkspur.

have been seen since 1980. Historically, 35 occurrences were known in Benton, Polk, Marion, Multnomah, and Clackamas counties. Population sizes range from as little as 1 to as many as 2000 although most existing populations have between 10 and 100 plants.

Peacock larkspur lives in native wet prairie habitats and on the edges of Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) and Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) woodlands. Several existing populations are also found along roadsides and fencerows that have escaped development.



Willamette Valley wet prairie habitat.

## Willamette Valley Prairies

Prairies are open grasslands that have few, if any, trees or shrubs. Prairies in the Willamette Valley typically occur at fairly low elevations in the valley bottom or surrounding foothills. Wet prairies, home to peacock larkspur and other native species, are usually flooded during part of the year, and are dominated by herbaceous plants. Less than 1% of native Willamette Valley prairies remain today.

Wet prairies are maintained by seasonal flooding and summer fires or other disturbance which prevent the encroachment of woody vegetation.

## Life history

Peacock larkspur does not self-pollinate and instead requires the aid of bumblebees to transfer pollen between plants. Although bumblebees generally prefer blue flowers, the white flowers of peacock larkspur may be able to lure them in by reflecting ultraviolet light.



Bumblebee on a peacock larkspur.

The lifespan of individual plants is not known although it is believed to be relatively long. Single plants have been observed to have over 100 flowers, however, not all plants flower every year. Even large, mature, plants may remain dormant through a growing season. This pattern of dormancy may be a response to moisture availability.