Oxalidaceae R.Br.

Tamra Dickson Prior

Oxalis or Wood-sorrel Family

**Herbs** perennial. **Leaves** alternate, sometimes basal; with watery, sour juice due to oxalic acid. **Inflorescences** axillary, on peduncles, cymose or a solitary flower. **Flowers** perfect, hypogynous, regular, 5-merous throughout; sepals distinct; petals distinct or slightly connate at the base; stamens 10, in two layers, nectary-like, connate at the base, sometimes without anthers; anthers two-celled; outer filaments thickened; ovary superior; carpels 5, locules 5; ovules 2 to several in each locule. **Fruits** loculicidal capsule; embryo large with 2 cotyledons, endosperm oily. **Seeds** with a large basal aril.

About 7 genera.

1 genus in Oregon.

**Oxalis** L.

Oxalis, Wood-sorrel

**Stems** present or not. **Roots** often with corms or rhizomes. **Leaves** trifoliate with heart-shaped leaflets; leaflets folded along midrib, closing at night. **Flowers** showy; sepals persistent; petals yellow or white to pink or violet, withering and deciduous; styles 5, slender, distinct; stigmas capitate. **Fruits** elongate, 5-locular. **Seeds** aril white.

Approximately 600 species.

5 species in Oregon.

*Oxalis incarnata* is a cultivated ornamental, native to South Africa. It is found in shady, disturbed place, typically in an urban setting. It has solitary white to pale pink flowers and leaves in whorl-like clusters of more than 10.
1. Plants with stems, flowers yellow
   2. Petals 12-20 mm long .................................................. *O. suksdorfii*
   2’. Petals 4-9 mm long.
      3. Seeds without white ridges, plants creeping ...................... *O. corniculata*
      3’. Seeds with white ridges, plants growing in clusters or tufts ....... *O. dillenii*

1’. Plants acaulescent, flowers white or pinkish.
   4. One flower per scape, petals 13-20 mm long, capsules ovoid, 7-9 mm long .................................................. *O. oregana*
   4’. Multiple flowers per scape, petals about 10 mm long, capsules linear, 2-3 mm long .................................................. *O. trilliifolia*

*Oxalis corniculata* L.

Creeping yellow wood sorrel

Plants: non-rhizomatous. Stems trailing; glabrous or more or less with antrorse to retrorse stiff hairs, erect parts of stems less than 1 dm tall, brown or red or purple, occasionally green. Leaves: stipules mostly brown, from broad and 2-4 mm long to linear and about 1.5 mm long; leaves 1-4 cm long, leaflets obcordate; petioles long. Inflorescences cymes, 2-5 per peduncle. Flowers petals 4-8 mm long, yellow, entire; sepals less than 4.5 mm long; filaments glabrous. Fruits capsule oblong, 1.5-2.5 cm, gray with stiff hairs. Seeds brown, ridged lengthwise, crests of ridges not white.

Lawns, gardens, disturbed sites.

Bent, Clat, Coos, Curr, Jack, Lane, Linc, Mari, Mult, Till, Umat, Union, Wasc, Whee; WA, ID, NV, CA; United States except for AK, CO, IA, KS, MN, NE; S Canada except Alberta, cosmopolitan.

This species is possibly toxic to sheep in large quantities.

*Oxalis dillenii* Jacq.

Greygreen sorrel, southern yellow wood sorrel
Plants: cespitose, lacking rhizomes but branches occasionally rooting. Stems spreading but not trailing, light green, 1-4 dm tall; bristles antrorse, pointed, nonseptate. Leaves: stipules green, not prominent, from broad and 2-3 mm long to much narrower and shorter; leaf blades 1-4 cm long; leaflets obcordate. Inflorescences umbellate. Flowers: (1-)2-7 flowers per peduncle; petals 4-8 mm, yellow, entire; sepals lanceolate, 3.7-5 mm long; filaments glabrous. Fruits capsule oblong, 1.5-2.5 cm long, gray with stiff hairs. Seeds brown, ridged crosswise, crests of ridges white.

Fields, glades and waste grounds.

Clac, Clat, Doug, Sher; WA, Alberta to AZ, east to the Atlantic, except Manitoba; introduced to W. Europe.

Oxalis dillenii is grown as an ornamental in gardens and has occasionally escaped and established naturalized populations. To date, this species is seldom found in our area.

Oxalis oregana Nutt. ex Torr. & A. Gray

Oregon wood sorrel, redwood sorrel

N

Plants: rhizomes covered in scaly persistent stipules. Leaves basal with fine brownish hairs; stipules jointed to petioles; petioles 3-20 cm long; leaflets up to 4.5 cm broad. Inflorescences scapes, 5-15 cm tall, 1-flowered, 2 bracts near flower. Flowers: petals white to dark pink, sometimes with red-tinged veins, 13-20 mm long; staminal tube 1-2 mm long. Fruits capsules, ovoid-globose, 7-9 mm long. Seeds almond-shaped, 4 mm long with grooves running generally lengthwise.

Moist woods, coastal to mountain foothills.

Bent, Clac, Clat, Colu, Coos, Curr, Doug, Hood, Jose, Lane, Linc, Linn, Mari, Mult, Polk, Till, Wash, Yamh; CA, WA, BC.

The flower color of this species varies from pink to almost pure white. However, no pattern based on geography or habitat appears to explain this variation.
**Oxalis suksdorfii** Trel.

Suksdorf’s oxalis, western yellow oxalis

N

**Plants:** rhizomatous; finely hairy, most hairs unicellular but some septate. **Stems** decumbent to erect, 3-15 cm long. **Leaves:** stipules small or lacking; petioles 2-5 cm long; leaf blades 1.5-3 cm broad; leaflets cuneate to obcordate. **Inflorescences** 1- to 3-flowered; peduncles exceeding the leaves in height. **Flowers:** pedicels reflexed at maturity; petals yellow, 12-20 mm long, rounded; sepals villous, oblong to narrowly ovate, 4-6 mm; filaments hairy, connate. **Fruits** capsules, oblong, 1-1.5 cm long, covered in grey hairs.

Typically in moist coastal woods but occasional in rather dry open slopes.

Bent, Clac, Clat, Coos, Curr, Doug, Jose, Lane, Linn, Mari, Mult, Polk, Wash; CA, WA.

**Oxalis trilliifolia** Hook.

Great oxalis, trillium leaved oxalis

N

**Plant:** stout scaly rhizomes, creeping. **Leaves** basal; petioles 5-30 cm long, covered in fine brown hairs; leaflets 3-6 cm wide, obovate-cuneate or obcordate. **Inflorescences** scapes, generally longer or equal to leaves, rarely shorter, 4-15 flowered. **Flowers:** petals approximately 1 cm long, white or pink, emarginate; sepals less than 5 mm long, lanceolate. **Fruits** capsules, linear, 2-3 cm long, slender-beaked. **Seeds** brown, shining, 3.5-4 mm long, shallowly ridged.

Meadows and moist woods.

Bent, Clac, Clat, Colu, Coos, Curr, Hood, Jack, Lane, Linc, Linn, Mari, Mult, Till, Wash, Yamh; CA, ID, WA.