

Partners of a Parasitic Prairie Plant

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Golden paintbrush is a hemiparasite, meaning it can parasitize other plants but does not need to in order to survive.

It links its roots with other plant roots to gain nutrients – the connections are called “haustoria” (pictured below).

Golden paintbrush historically ranged from BC to OR, but there are currently only 12 populations of this species in the world.

It is listed as endangered in Washington.



Golden paintbrush
(*Castilleja levisecta*)



Haustorial connection

I hope to improve restoration methods for this species by finding novel host plants that increase the ability of golden paintbrush to grow and reproduce.

I will test nine different host species, including native lupines, Nootka rose, and yarrow.

Golden paintbrush will be planted with hosts in the greenhouse, then out-planted at a prairie restoration site in Olympia.

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