

donax Flycatcher (believed Least), Red-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Baltimore Oriole, Swainson's Thrush, White-throated and Harris' sparrows (readers can no doubt add others). All these species swallowed the berries whole excepting the finches; they discarded the pulp for the seeds inside the large stone.

OWL'S-CLOVER

by Keith F. Best, Swift Current

Owl's-clover (*Orthocarpus luteus* Nutt.), sometimes called orthocarp, is a relatively small annual herb of the figwort family, ranging from British Columbia to Saskatchewan through Nebraska to New Mexico and California. It grows in a wide variety of soils, both dry and moist, from the sagebrush belt to the spruce-fir belt. Although probably most common on grasslands or in grass-weed types, it also occurs in bush and timbered areas. It grows more abundantly in meadows and parklands where the original vegetation has been reduced; consequently owl's-clover frequently is abundant on areas where the cover of more palatable plants has been somewhat depleted by overgrazing.

Owl's-clover derives its generic name *Orthocarpus* from the Greek words *orthos*, upright, and *karpos*, fruit, and it refers to the erect seed pods. The specific name *luteus*, is Latin for yellow and refers to the color of the flowers. This species is often called yellow owl's-clover or gold-tongue.

Blooming in late July and throughout August, owl's-clover is quite common on the dry, open prairie. Usually a single-stemmed erect annual, it is often found branched, a condition due to terminal bud damage by grazing. The leaves are one-half to one and one-half inches long, linear or narrowly lanceolate, lying relatively close to the stem and ascending. The yellow or gold flowers are borne in dense, leafy terminal spikes, interspersed with green bracts that are

often tinged with red. The corolla of the flower is strongly two-lipped, the upper lip being erect or arched, while the lower one is more or less spreading and usually three-lobed. The stamens are arranged in two pairs, ascending under the upper lip.

The species deserves notice because of its commonness and wide distribution, and because it is a representative member of a rather large genus of range species of somewhat unusual appearance. The plants are usually small, produce very little herbage, and are generally low in palatability. Accordingly, owl's-clover is of minor consequence as a forage species. It is practically worthless for cattle and only poor to fair sheep forage.



Drawing by K. F. Best
Owl's-clover *Orthocarpus luteus*