

Allium praecox T. Brandeg., EARLY ONION. Perennial herb, geophytic, bulb-bearing, scapose with 1(2) erect inflorescence, in range to 30 cm tall; shoots 2–3-leaved at flowering but blades withering at tips, glabrous, with odor of onion when crushed; bulbs ovoid, ca. 15 × 10 mm, encrusted with dried, brownish layers, ± netlike (reticulate) on outer layers, the reticulations at the base of the outermost layers elongated, looped and bent like terraced rice paddies on a steep mountain slope, mostly without any specific orientation but some places tending to be vertically oriented, especially above midpoint tending to be horizontally oriented but not in a herringbone pattern, the reticulations of subdermal layers elongated and irregularly contorted, the innermost layers not reticulate. **Stems (scapes):** erect, cylindric, to 2.5 mm diameter, green from base upward aging red-tinged, white belowground, stiff but somewhat fleshy with fibrous core. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple and sheathing; sheath 25–40 mm long, membranous aging scarious, extending to or slightly above soil surface; blade linear, in range 100–300 mm long, solid, entire, in \times -section crescent-shaped to almost semicircular, entire, parallel-veined. **Inflorescence:** umbel-like, terminal, hemispheric, 10–20-flowered with as many as 1/2 flowers open at once, bracteate, glabrous; bracts at top of scape 2, covering flower buds when emerging from soil, fused at base, broadly lanceolate to ovate, 6–20 × 5–7 mm, 3–4-veined, pale pinkish brown with 3–4 brownish veins and reddish at tip, tail-like (caudate) to needlelike at tip, persistent and reflexed; pedicel spreading to ascending, at anthesis 18–25 mm long increasing to 40 mm in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 11–15 mm across, bowl-shaped; **tepals** 6 in 2 whorls, ± free with some fusion at bases, spreading, elliptic or nearly so, in range 6–7.5 × 3.2–4.1 mm (outer tepals) and 5.8–7.6 × 3–3.5 mm (inner tepals), light pink to light purplish pink with green to purplish pink (brownish) midstripe, with slightly outward bending at tip, perianth persistent, papery, and bell-shaped in fruit; **stamens** 6, fused together at bases into a whitish ring and thickly fused with bases of tepals; filaments ascending, ± equal, free for 2.5–3.3 mm, white to pink or purple, abruptly flared at base to 1.5 mm wide, tapered to narrow at top; anthers versatile, dithecal, oblong, 1.6–1.7 × 0.8 mm, light purple to dark purple (darker after dehiscing), longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish to light purple; **nectary** beneath ovary and concealed by stamen bases, producing copious nectar; **pistil** 1, 3.3 mm long, on a green receptacle; ovary superior, 3-lobed with 2 ridges per lobe, 1.3–2 × 2.3 mm, pinkish to purple, not crested at anthesis, 3-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules attached to center; style 2.2 mm long with basal 0.7 mm concealed by lobes of ovary, whitish to pale pink, unbranched; stigma terminal, domed, = style width. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, dehiscent by 3 widely spreading valves, typically 1–4-seeded, to 2.5 mm long, scarious, valves broadly heart-shaped and smaller if without seed. **Seed:** short-ovoid, 1.6–1.8 × 1.4–1.6 mm, dull black, irregularly dimpled and appearing somewhat collapsed approaching hilum, cells polygonal in longitudinal rows. Mid-April–early May.

Native. Geophytic perennial herb known to date only from a small population just above the waterfall, in the dry creek bed of La Jolla Canyon (SMM). *Allium praecox* is challenging to identify using vegetative and reproductive characters, but in range these are relatively short plant with pinkish flowers.

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