

*Ambrosia psilostachya* DC., WESTERN RAGWEED. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, 1-stemmed at base from rhizome, branched above with ascending axillary shoots often terminating in inflorescence, erect, 50–140(–200) cm tall; monoecious; shoots gray-green to green, villous to short-hirsute and with scattered, colorless, short glandular hairs, aromatic; rhizome deep-seated, ascending. **Stems:** ± cylindric, < 7 mm diameter, light green and not striped, with nonglandular and glandular hairs. **Leaves:** ± opposite decussate below, helically alternate above, deeply pinnately lobed with 7 or more lobes, sessile to short-petiolate, without stipules; petiole absent or indistinct from blade, winged, < 3 mm long, flattened at base; blade ovate to lanceolate in outline, 20–130 × 10–70 mm, long-tapered to broadly tapered at base, acute at lobe tips and sometimes obtuse on terminal lobe, entire or with several coarse teeth on margins but commonly entire above midpoint on lateral lobes, pinnately veined, with ascending, villous hairs. **Inflorescences:** unisexual heads, in terminal, racemelike arrays, array of several(0) short, cymelike shoots at base having 3 or more pistillate heads and above axis with many alternate, nodding staminate heads, the pistillate portion to 50 mm long with ± sessile heads, the staminate portion 30–100 mm long with stalked heads, pistillate head 3 mm across and 1-flowered, staminate head discoid, 2.5–3.5 mm across and 6–16-flowered, bracteate, short-hairy and inconspicuously glandular-hairy. **Staminate head:** peduncle ascending to spreading, 0.5–2.5 mm long, pale green, soft-pubescent; **involucre** ± obliquely cup-shaped, 2–3 mm long, of fused phyllaries, green, the exposed lobes 3–7, unequal, with obscurely crenate lobes, the largest lobes sometimes with blackish midvein at least at base; receptacle with threadlike bractlets (paleae), as long as flower, colorless or with black midvein. **Staminate flower:** radial, < 2.5 mm long; **calyx (pappus)** absent; **corolla** 4–5-lobed, funnel-shaped, ± 1.3 mm long, translucent-white to tannish, with scattered glandular hairs; tube + throat ± 1 mm long; lobes deltate; **stamens** 4–5, fused to corolla at base of throat; filaments short; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, basifixed, dithecal, 0.8 mm long, > filament length, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** absent. **Pistillate head:** bract subtending cymelike cluster leaflike, to 30 mm long; first head subtended by 2 opposite, linear bracts, to 8 mm long, with a pair of secondary heads each subtended by 2 opposite bracts, 3-order or higher order heads sometimes present; **involucre** cup-shaped, ± 8 × 3 mm, of fused phyllaries, with 4–7 projections (tubercles) lacking sharp tips. **Pistillate flower:** **calyx (pappus)** absent; **corolla** absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, mushroom-shaped or acorn-shaped, ± 4 × 2.5 mm, ovary base inversely conic, ± 2 × 1.8 mm, greenish yellow, triangular in ×-section, the cap hemispheric, ± 2 × 2.5 mm, dark brown, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style ± 2.5 mm long, 2-branched, the branches threadlike, becoming strongly reflexed. **Fruit:** cypsela, 1 surrounded and hidden by a burlike involucre (cypsela loose inside); bur inversely pear-shaped to top-shaped and not spinescent, 2–3.5 mm long (including beak), straw-colored to brownish, with 0–7 blunt, white, toothlike tubercles, sides veiny; cypsela obovoid, dark brown; beak conic, < 1 mm long, short-hirsute. Late July–mid-November.

Native. Herbaceous perennial commonly encountered throughout the range in full sun or partial shade, on coastal bluffs as well as in most interior plant communities, especially occurring in disturbed soil. *Ambrosia psilostachya* forms colonies from deep rhizomes,

and is one of the few species that successfully flowers each year during dry summer months, when surrounding vegetation is already severely water-stressed. Western ragweed forms long, terminal axes with many staminate heads with or without some pistillate heads at the base. The bur of this species contains only one fruit (seed), and this is the only ragweed species in range in which the bur is not spinescent.

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