

***Batis maritima*** L., SALTWORT, BEACHWORT. Subshrub from woody base, evergreen, halophytic, fibrous-rooted, several-many-stemmed at base, clumped and mat-forming, typically trailing and stolonlike with conspicuous internodes and shorter ascending shoots, ± tufted at nodes on young axillary shoots, prostrate to decumbent or ascending, in range to 40 cm tall; dioecious; shoots firm-fleshy, glabrous; adventitious roots forming at nodes touching substrate. **Stems:** ± cylindric, to 5 mm diameter, light yellow-green, internodes to 45 mm long; old, rooted prostrate stems brown, striped with fiber clusters. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, subsessile, with stipules; stipules 2, minute, peglike or dotlike, abscising precociously; petiole hemi-cylindric, 1–1.5 mm long, with an appressed, whitish, descending flap concealing leaf attachment; blade initially hemi-cylindric to subcylindric and club-shaped or linear-oblongate with flattened upper side, aging cylindric, (5–)10–45 × 2–6 mm, greener than stem but turning yellowish at senescence, tapered at base, entire, acute to rounded at tip, venation obscure. **Inflorescences:** unisexual spikes (rarely panicle of 3 staminate spikes), axillary, conelike with opposite decussate bractlets. **Staminate inflorescence:** rhombic-ovoid, 5–10 × 4–5 mm, 8–12-flowered with flowers in 4 vertical series, yellow-green, rhomboidal in ×-section; bractlet heart-shaped, thin-margined, ridged above midpoint (or full length of the lowest bractlets), with minute tooth at tip. **Staminate flower:** in bud enclosed in sac 1.5 mm diameter, at anthesis splitting from tip; **sepals** = sac; **petals** 4, clawed and spade-shaped, 1.5–1.8 mm long, translucent-white; claw 0.6–0.9 mm long; limb ± 1 mm wide, irregular on margins; **stamens** 4, free, alternate with petals, exerted; filaments ± bottle-shaped, 3–4 mm long, translucent-white, swollen, bent near tip; anthers dorsifixed-versatile, dithecal, 1.2–1.6 × 0.8 mm, light greenish yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow, copious; **pistil** absent. **Pistillate inflorescence:** round-obovoid, at anthesis 5–9 mm long, 4–12-flowered, fleshy, bumpy (= ovaries), ovaries fused; peduncle 1 mm long; bractlet heart-shaped, 1–1.5 × 1–2 mm, yellow-green, with whitish membranous margin and descending whitish flap (as in leaves), less fleshy and flatter above, prow-shaped and fleshy in basal pair. **Pistillate flower:** not enclosed in sac; **perianth** absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, 2-chambered by appearing 4-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style absent; stigmas 2, together 1–2 mm across, capitate, conspicuously long-papillate. **Fruit:** multiple, fleshy indehiscent, ± potato-shaped with embedded ovaries, 10–18 × 5–8 mm, shrinking when dried, yellow-green drying brown, of each flower drupelike with typically 4 pyrenes per ovary, 3-sided fusiform, 4–5 × 1.5–2 mm, tannish, with outer face convex and inner faces flat and forming a right angle. May–September (mature fruit by mid-August).

Native. Evergreen fleshy perennial inhabiting salt marsh, often submersed and colonizing mud substrate with long, trailing shoots woody at the plant base. In range *Batis maritima* is now found mainly in the salt marsh community at Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, although it is encountered elsewhere along the California coastline. *Batis maritima* has opposite decussate fleshy leaves (“succulent”). This dioecious species produces nonshowy flowers in spikes, and forms fleshy multiple fruits containing dry pyrenes.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson