

Calochortus venustus Benth., BUTTERFLY MARIPOSA LILY. Perennial herb, geophytic, bulb-bearing, fibrous-rooted, 1-stemmed at base, in range unbranched or 1-branched \pm at midplant (= tall specimen), erect to ascending, in range 30–70 cm tall; shoot with 1 basal leaf and 1–2 cauline leaves, basal leaf withered and abscised before flowering, glabrous; at flowering with 1 bulblet at base of stem. **Stems:** faintly ridged, not noticeably zigzagged, < 3 mm diameter, stiff, photosynthetic, green with ridges aging reddish, internodes > 160 mm long. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple, sessile with closed, sheathing base; blade narrowly linear and commonly inrolled (especially when water-stressed), in range 100–150 \times 4.5–6 mm, the widest at leaf base, entire with minutely papillate margins, long-tapered to tip, membranous between veins at base, parallel-veined with numerous, unequal, closely spaced veins, surfaces turning nongreen with reddish veins, with minute papillae along the largest veins. **Inflorescence:** cyme, terminal, open, typically 2-flowered or reduced to 1 flower (especially on lateral branches), bracteates, glabrous; bractlet subtending pedicel leaflike, < pedicel, 24–55 mm long; pedicel stemlike, ascending to erect, at anthesis 30–150 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 22–50 mm across; **sepals** 3, acuminate-lanceolate, 24–50 \times 6–8 mm, at anthesis becoming coiled backward, typically glabrous (sometimes hairy below midpoint), asymmetric with exposed margin narrower, in bud sepals greenish with white to lavender membranous margins aging purplish red mottled at tip and on margins, at anthesis below midpoint fading to light green or creamy white between mostly green veins (marginal veins sometimes purplish), sometimes marked at the base with a yellowish green oval overlain by a mottled, purplish red, ovate ring or also a central, oblong purplish red spot (parts of these marking may be absent or only partially developed), above midpoint lavender or purplish with purplish veins; **petals** 3, with a hairy nectary, fan-shaped, 22–52 \times 24–42 mm, entire along the broadly tapered, thickened base, with outer margin broadly truncate and \pm jagged with a short point at tip, below midpoint white to creamy white, with various markings surrounding nectary, above midpoint blushed lavender with a central marking; **nectary** on upper surface above base, slightly depressed, without a margin, rectangular or squarish, 5–6 \times 3–5 mm, yellowish green and sometimes purplish red mottled on surface of petal and visible on lower surface of petal, densely hairy; hairs thick and wavy, 1–1.7 mm long, reddish or reddish at tips and whitish to yellow-orange at bases or purplish red at tips and yellow-orange at bases; marginal hairs and hairs on petal surface to 3 mm long, purplish red, yellowish, or 2-colored; markings around nectary \pm continuous or discrete, if continuous \pm solid purplish red above and below and narrowing to the nectary with spots following venation pattern, if discrete the mark below nectary purplish red, elongate-rectangular, and with some similarly colored short lines lateral to margin at tip and sometimes lateral to margin at base; the mark immediately above nectary purplish red, \pm squarish or of 5–6 converging purplish red lines; the mark above midpoint semi-elliptic (with a flat base and arching tip) or crescent-shaped, densely purplish red centrally and spotted around margin or yellowish in central part and bordered by a series of short linear, reddish purple spots; **stamens** 6, fused to bases of sepals and petals; filaments ascending, compressed front-to-back, 6–9.7 mm long, \pm 1.5 mm wide near base and tapered toward tip, whitish but sometimes aging pale lavender; anthers basifixed, dithecal, lanceolate to narrowly oblong, 7.6–13 \times 2–2.4 mm, cream-colored, longitudinally and sideways dehiscent, strongly angled becoming flattened after dehiscence; pollen cream; **pistil** 1, at anthesis 11–20 mm long, 2–3 mm < stamens;

ovary superior, linear and conspicuously 3-angled, 9–17 mm long, light green, glaucous, 3-chambered, each chamber with many ovules along 2 placentae attached to center; style < 1 mm long; stigma 3-lobed, each lobe recurved, 1–1.3 mm long, tinged rose, crested, grooved and papillate on each lobe. **Fruit:** capsule, septicidal, 3-valved, dehiscent from top downward, many-seeded, erect, linear and 3-angled, 50–77 × 6.5–7 mm, straw-colored, tips spreading, 3-chambered, ± 50-seeded with seeds in 2 rows per chamber. **Seed:** in face view elliptic but with 1 pointed end, 4.7–5.5 × 1.3–1.6 mm, light tan, parallelogramlike, in lateral view flattish with perpendicular ledge as margin. Early May–mid-June.

Native. Perennial geophyte, a distinctive species of mariposa lily known in range only from a few open, grassy slopes on the western side of Westlake Village (SMM), growing in rocky loam with many other interesting native herbs. This species, from a distance, resembles a whitish form of the common *Calochortus catalinae*, which generally has completed flowering before *C. venustus* begins to bloom. Sepals and petals in this species are approximately the same length. In *C. venustus*, petal pigmentation of our local populations is complex; the basal (proximal) half has a hairy, yellowish green nectary gland, a hairy blotch, and a solid spot, and above the midpoint is a faded spot, whereas in *C. catalinae* there is a purple spot only at the base.

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