

Chlorogalum pomeridianum (DC.) Kunth var. *pomeridianum*. Perennial herb, geophytic, bulb-bearing, rosetted, 1-stemmed at base, scapose, branched, erect inflorescence 50–290 cm tall; shoots with only basal leaves, glabrous; bulb ovoid, to 150 × 75 mm wide, heavily covered with dark brown fibers. **Stems (scape)**: cylindric, to 25 mm diameter, green, glaucous (especially within inflorescence), with very long internodes between bracts; having a hard rind and watery core. **Leaves**: helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade of basal leaves strap-shaped, 500–1100+ × 20–55 mm, the widest near midblade, entire and conspicuously wavy on margins, long-tapered at tip, drying and decaying from tip backward during or just after flowering, yellow-green to bright green but white at base, parallel-veined. **Inflorescence**: panicle of erect and ascending racemes, terminal, open, the branches straight and each with 20–65 flowers, flowers typically 1 per node but sometimes subopposite, having to 6 flowers open per raceme per day, glabrous, bracteate; peduncle 180–1050+ mm long; bracts typically 2 per node with one below branch and the other in axil of branch, lower bract leaflike, linear-lanceolate to narrowly triangular, 10–65 × 13–20 mm, tapered from base to tip, upper bract triangular, 15–30 × 10–12 mm, usually axillary but sometimes displaced upward along branch (absent); axes glaucous and green often aging reddish purple, internodes close in young bud becoming widely spaced after flowering and eventually 5–40 mm long; bractlets subtending pedicel 1 or 2, the outer one partially sheathing, narrowly acuminate-lanceolate, 3–9 mm long, often 3-veined, membranous on margins, typically concealing a much smaller ovate bractlet positioned to 1 side, both becoming papery in fruit; pedicel ascending, at anthesis 5–14+ mm long, glaucous, persistent after flower abscises but not increasing in length. **Flower**: radial, bisexual, 30–45 mm across, vespertine (opening a few hours before sunset and closing in the middle of the night), unscented; **tepals** 6 in 2 whorls, ± free, becoming twisted over ovary and persistent in fruit, initially spreading to recurved, equal, linear-oblongate, 15–26 × 2.5–3 mm, of outer whorl slightly narrower and 3-veined from below tip to base, 1-veined at tip, white at anthesis with or without a pink, greenish, or rose-purple midstripe on back that often darkens after anthesis, papillate-puberulent at tip; **stamens** 6, fused to tepal bases; filaments ascending, 13–16 mm long with basal 2–3.5 mm tapered from base, white, glabrous; anthers versatile, dithecal, linear, 5–6 mm long, in range pale yellow or light yellow-green, arrow-shaped at base, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **nectaries** 6, at bases of tepals, producing copious thin nectar pooling around base of ovary; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, at anthesis broadly ellipsoid with 3 slightly sunken sides, 3–4.5 mm long, light green, 6-veined, 3-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules attached to center; style erect, 14.5–17 mm long, tapered from base, white, glabrous; stigma shortly 3-lobed, the lobes ± 0.2 mm long. **Fruit**: capsule, loculicidal, erect, typically 6-seeded, 3-lobed ± spheroid, 5–7 mm long and wide, with 4–8 transverse, riblike veins of varying lengths on each valve. **Seed**: ± ovoid to comma-shaped, 3.7–4.4 × 2.3–2.8 mm, black, sharply cobblestonelike. Mid-May–late June.

Native. Perennial herb, a relatively common, rosetted, scapose geophyte of shrublands and open sites throughout the range, stimulated by and appearing especially robust in the growing season after a burn, and then often not seen aboveground until the next burn. Each day its flowers open from 4–5 pm, awaiting moths that visit them after sunset, and each flower remains open about eight hours. Its deep-seated bulb contains abundant, suds-

producing saponins (“soap plant”), and native Americans and early settlers used *Chlorogalum* bulbs as soap and crushed them to stupefy fish, but the bulbs were also roasted for food.

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