

Claytonia exigua Torrey & A. Gray subsp. *exigua*, PALE CLAYTONIA. Annual, fleshy, taprooted and with minute tuberous bodies on root, rosetted, cespitose with axillary flowering shoots, 3–10 cm tall; shoots with highly condensed stem and numerous, grayish spreading basal leaves, glabrous, glaucous. **Stems:** = axis of axillary flowering shoots. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade cylindrical-linear, in range 10–40 × < 1 mm, entire, acute at tip, venation obscure. **Inflorescence:** racemelike cyme (raceme), axillary, < 10-flowered, ± 1-sided, bracteate, glabrous, glaucous; peduncle cylindrical, 15–30 mm long, sometimes reddish, with bracts near top; bracts 2 (= 2 cauline leaves of some authors), fused unequally back and front sides, unequal, V-shaped to horn-shaped, in range 5–17 mm long, 1 bract at least 1 mm longer, fused for < 3 mm of length, fleshy, ± hemi-cylindric, acuminate at tip; axis green or reddish; bract at the lowest node subtending 2 or 3 pedicels, lanceolate, 2–3 mm long; pedicel at anthesis ascending and 4–6 mm long increasing 2× and strongly recurved in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, in range 2.5–4.5 mm across; **sepals** (bracteoles of some authors) 2, opposite, initially erect becoming flaring in fruit, subequal, ovate, 1.5–2.5 mm long increasing to 2.5–3 mm long in fruit, the longer sepal partially enclosing inner sepal, green or with red and glaucous, acuminate to notched at tip, faintly parallel-veined, persistent; **petals** (petaloid sepals of some authors) (3–)5, obovate, in range 2–4 mm long, white often with faint pink veins, narrowed and greenish at base, truncate or rounded to notched at tip; **stamens** 5, opposite petals and fused to petal bases; filament free portions erect, 1–1.7 mm long, flat, wider at base than petal base, whitish or pink approaching tip; anthers versatile, dithecal, 0.4–0.6 mm long, pink, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow or pale amber; **nectary disc** surrounding stalked base of ovary, low-ringlike, producing copious thin nectar collecting at bases of stamens; **pistil** 1, ca. 2 mm long; ovary superior, obovoid to spheroid, 0.6–0.7 mm long, green, glabrous, 1-chambered with 3(4) ovules attached at base; style erect, 3-branched at midpoint, translucent; stigmas 3, ascending to erect, often touching anthers, 0.4–0.7 mm long, white aging recurved and pink, papillate. **Fruit:** capsule, 3-valved dehiscent top-to-base, 3-seeded, ± spheric, 1.5–2.2 mm, with margins rolling inward and forcibly expelling seeds. **Seed:** compressed-ovoid to compressed-ellipsoid, in range 1–1.6 × 0.9–1.3 mm, glossy black, with convex cells; with white elaiosome in micropylar notch. Early March–early April.

Native. An inconspicuous annual growing in undisturbed rock ledges with moss and *Selaginella bigelovii*, also coincident in central SMM with *Lewisia rediviva*. *Claytonia exigua* is considered to be a selfer with small flowers, although it still produces copious thin nectar, and this species grows in separate local populations but in the same microhabitat and same vicinity as *C. gypsophiloides*.

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