

Claytonia perfoliata Willd. subsp. *mexicana* (Rydb.) John M. Miller & K. L. Chambers, MADREAN MINER'S LETTUCE. Annual, weakly taprooted, rosetted, acaulous with several-many, spreading, ascending, or erect axillary inflorescences, (1-)5-35 cm tall; shoots with only basal leaves, somewhat fleshy, glabrous. **Stems:** condensed, < 10 mm long (remainder = peduncle of flowering shoot), ± fleshy. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, long-petiolate, without stipules; petiole cylindric, 45-150 mm long, flaring at base, pale green but darker and slightly expanding approaching blade; blade ovate or obovate, rounded deltate, kidney-shaped, trowel-shaped (trullate), or somewhat narrowly rhombic to linear (diminutive plants), 10-53 × 4-75 mm, broadly tapered to long-tapered at base, entire, slightly acuminate or acute to obtuse or rounded at tip, with pseudopalmar venation but veins not raised. **Inflorescence:** racemelike cyme or panicle of racemelike cymes (racemes), axillary, > leaves, (5-)12-55-flowered, 1-sided, bracteate, glabrous; peduncle (= stem of some authors) ascending, cylindric, in range < 25-300+ mm long, 0.7-3 mm diameter at base, whitish to pinkish (often etiolated), terminated by a bract encircling axis (perfoliate); perfoliate bract (= 2 fused cauline leaves of some authors) ± circular and funnel-shaped (heart-shaped to kidney-shaped), 5-80 mm long (measured flattened), often with 2 minute teeth, green, with smaller, sometimes free bract subtending rachis present, free bract lanceolate to asymmetrically ovate, 7-8 × 2-4 mm; rachis initially condensed with flower buds and first blossoms, flowers often in clusters of 5-8(-16) or simply paired, internodes on axes 0.5-17 mm long; bractlet subtending pedicel absent; pedicel 1.5-4.5 mm long increasing 2-3× in fruit, glossy. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 3-5 mm across; **sepals** 2 (bracteoles of some authors), opposite, subequal, ovate-deltate, 1.2-2.3 × 1.4-1.9 mm increasing to 4 mm long in fruit, obtuse or rounded and sometimes minutely notched at tip, green or aging with reddish blotches above midpoint, glabrous, parallel-veined, persistent; **petals** 5 (petaloid sepals of some authors), fused ca. 0.1 mm at base, spreading, oblanceolate to lanceolate or oblong, 1.8-2.4(-3.5) × 0.7-1.1 mm, white to pale pink, narrowly tapered at base, truncate to broadly obtuse or shallowly notched at tip; **stamens** 5, opposite petals and fused to their bases for ± 0.3 mm; filament free portions erect, slender, 0.6-1.1 mm long, translucent; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.2 mm long, whitish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1, 1.5-1.8 mm long; ovary superior, spheroid, yellowish green, glabrous, 1-chambered with 3 ovules attached to base; style ± 0.3 mm long, translucent; stigmas 3, ascending to spreading often touching anthers, equal or unequal, ± 0.6 mm long, whitish, papillate. **Fruit:** capsule, 3-valved, mostly 3-seeded, spheroid, 2-2.5 × 1.8-2.2 mm, dehiscent top-to-bottom with margins rolling inward and forcibly expelling seeds, seeds attached to base; sepals persistent. **Seed:** compressed-ovoid to compressed-ellipsoid, 1.2-1.8 × 0.9-1.5 mm, glossy dark reddish brown to very dark brown, smooth, with epidermal cells clearly visible and raised, having an appendage on micropyle (elaiosome) in notch, elaiosome ± 0.3 mm. Early January-late May.

Native. Annual extremely common during winter and spring throughout the range in many habitats, especially on moist and shady or partially shady habitats and beneath shrubs. *Claytonia perfoliata* is somewhat fleshy, and its shoots have been eaten like salad sprouts, hence the name miner's lettuce. The distinctive, funnel-shaped bract of this species, easily recognizable by amateurs, tends to have only very weakly developed teeth in this form.

Glossy seeds of *C. perfoliata* have raised cells. The common form in range is subspecies *mexicana*, but it is possible that among the diverse phenotypes observed, there may be other subspecies living locally that have not been recognized.

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