

*Corethrogyne filaginifolia* (Hooker & Arnott) Nutt., CUD-ASTER, CALIFORNIA ASTER.

Perennial herb to subshrub, taprooted, several–many-stemmed at base, principal shoots either unbranched or branched from many nodes along length, decumbent to ascending, 15–120 cm tall; shoots on lower plant whitish or grayish with dense woolly hairs, lower leaves senescent when flowering, upper plant woolly with sparser hairs + stalked glandular hairs. **Stems:** shallowly ridged, to 5 mm diameter, with 3 fine ridges descending from each leaf, turning golden brown, sometimes aging glabrescent. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate (lower cauline leaves) and sessile and ± clasping (upper cauline leaves), without stipules; petiole to 25 mm long on the lowest leaves; blade ± oblanceolate to linear, 12–90 × 2–20 mm, on lower cauline leaves tapered to petiole, entire or toothed to serrate and wavy on margins, acute to obtuse at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins raised on lower surface, glabrate or grayish green with tomentose hairs or densely woolly-tomentose, sometimes with stalked-glandular hairs or gland-dotted. **Inflorescence:** heads, terminal and solitary or on loose, cymelike branches in flat-topped, paniclelike arrays of 2–20+ heads, the lateral branches spreading to horizontal from successive nodes below terminal peduncle, head radiate, ca. 20 mm across, in range with (10–)13–21 ray flowers and 17–20+ disc flowers, bracteate, typically woolly and conspicuously short stalked-glandular; bract subtending lateral branch or branchlet leaflike, decreasing upward, ± woolly; peduncle slender, several–40+ mm long, conspicuously short stalked-glandular, with bracts along axis (= subtending future peduncles), bracts somewhat appressed, ± awl-shaped, 2–4 mm long; **involucre** ± inversely conic to cylindric or hemispheric to bell-shaped, 6–13 × 4–7 mm, phyllaries 30–90+ in 4–9 series, appressed with spreading tips, unequal, outer phyllaries linear, ca. 2 mm long, inner phyllaries oblanceolate or lanceolate, ca. 4 mm long, whitish with green tips, membranous on margins, 1-veined, glandular on exposed surfaces, sometimes fringed near tip; receptacle ± flat, without bractlets (paleae) but deeply pitted, the pits bordered by a narrow, toothed, crownlike rim. **Ray flower:** sterile, bilateral, ca. 2 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** absent; **corolla** 9–12 mm long; tube narrowly cylindric, 4–5.3 mm long, white, with scattered hairs; limb oblong, 4.5–7 × 1.5–2.4 mm, in range lavender to purplish (white), typically minutely 2-toothed; **stamens** absent; **pistil** reduced to an aborted ovary, minute, greenish or reddish purple. **Disc flower:** bisexual, radial, ± 1.5 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** many capillary bristles in 1 series, 4–6 mm long, light brown to golden brown; **corolla** 5-lobed, narrowly funnel-shaped to cylindric, (4–)5.5–7.2 mm long; tube 1–1.7 mm long, whitish to pale green; throat 4–4.5 mm long, pale green to vivid yellow above; lobes equal, acute, 0.5–0.7 mm long, vivid yellow, papillate on margins; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla at base of throat; filaments 1–1.5 mm long, transparent; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, included, 2.3–2.5 mm long, yellow, rounded at base, appendaged at tip, the appendages awl-shaped to needlelike, translucent light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, inversely conic, 1–1.5 mm long, at anthesis pinkish, sometimes spotted with lavender, densely sericeous with ascending colorless or whitish hairs, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style exerted, to 6.6 mm long, reddish purple at base to yellow approaching tip, 2-branched, the branches ascending, 1–1.3 mm long, yellow, flattened on inner face, expanding toward tip into an acute or rounded, long-papillate stigma. **Fruits:** cypselae, ± cylindric compressed side-to-side, 3–4 × 0.5–0.8 mm, brownish, straight or slightly curved, 5(–7)-ribbed, sericeous; pappus = whorl of 30–40(–65) capillary bristles,

unequal, in range 4–6 mm long, light reddish brown to golden brown, the bristles minutely barbed. Late May–early April.

Native. Perennial herb common throughout the range occurring in openings and low vegetation in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grassland, often in full sun but able to grow as well in partial shade beneath tree canopies. *Corethrogyne filaginifolia* for years was also known as *Lessingia filaginifolia*. It is one of the asters flowering during summer drought, but can also be found in flower throughout the winter. Heads of California aster superficially resemble those of *Erigeron foliosus*, which blooms during springtime, but the two species can easily be distinguished using simple vegetative and involucre features. In SMM rarely one can find plants of *C. filaginifolia* with essentially white ray flowers.

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