

Cryptantha muricata (Hooker & Arnott) A. Nelson & J. F. Macbr. var. *muricata*, SHOWY PRICKLY CRYPTANTHA. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, branching typically from top node downward, sometimes branching early at base, branches ascending with a disclike callus in the angle between the stem axes, erect, 8–100 cm tall; shoots hispid and with shorter hairs, the long hairs bristly with bulbous bases (pustulate), becoming scabrous from persistent bulbous bases. **Stems:** cylindric, to 9 mm diameter, with 2 low ridges descending from each cauline leaf, glossy green, conspicuously strigose with upward-pointing hairs and having scattered, erect, stiff hairs. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade linear, 6–110 × 1–5 mm, dull dark green, long-tapered at base, entire, blunt-acute with a yellowish, callus tip, midrib only visible and conspicuously sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, hispid with ascending hairs (never strigose). **Inflorescence:** spikelike cyme or panicle of 3–5 spikelike cymes, terminal on main and lateral stems, many-flowered, 1–sided, buds and open flowers densely coiled at tip, with 2-rows of flowers, flowers sessile or subsessile, essentially lacking bracts, hispid and strigose; bract subtending inflorescence = cauline leaf, narrowly lanceolate, < 25 mm long, sometimes alternate or opposite along peduncle, rarely also present above the lowest flower; peduncle cylindric, typically < 70 mm long (to 140 mm long), strigose with scattered stiff hairs. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 4.5–7.5 mm across; **sepals** 5, ± equal, lanceolate, 1.2–1.7(–2) mm long increasing 2× in fruit, dark green, hispid and with ascending, long soft hairs, inner surface soft-hairy approaching tips; **corolla** 5-lobed, short trumpet-shaped (short-salverform), white, glabrous, in bud dimples lacking on throat opposite sepals; tube cask-shaped or inversely conic, 1–1.2 × 1.5 mm, yellow, constricted at throat; throat 0.2 × 1.8 mm, white but aging yellow from 5 appendages, throat with sharp indentation just beneath each lobe; appendages opposite lobes, crescent-shaped to weakly 2-lobed, ca. 0.5 mm wide, at anthesis bright yellow often fading with age, short-papillate; lobes rounded, 2–2.5 mm long, overlapping at margins; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla tube at midpoint, included; filaments very short, whitish; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.7 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **nectary disc** beneath ovary, < 0.2 mm tall; **pistil** 1, included, ± 0.8 mm long; ovary superior, deeply 4-lobed, ca. 0.5 mm long, lobes ovoid, green, conspicuously papillate; style arising from center of ovary lobes, exposed portion ± 0.5 mm long, translucent, glabrous; stigma capitate. **Fruits:** nutlets, 4 (all maturing), erect, ovoid or deltoid, 1.5–2 mm long, frosty gray, lateral angles acute, outer face minutely bumpy, inner face with groove ± closed; style exceeding nutlets 0.2–0.5 mm. Mid-January–early June.

Native. Annual occurring commonly throughout the range, especially on shrubland burns. This herb does not form a basal rosette, and can form flower buds when the plant is less than 10 centimeters tall. *Cryptantha muricata* is both hispid and strigose, and the persistent, thickened to bulbous bases of the long, stiff hairs persist, so that the axes are distinctly scabrous. This wide-flowered species of *Cryptantha* has flowers very similar to those of *C. intermedia*, which is not strigose and lacks the underlayer of short hairs. At anthesis, the calyx lobes of *C. muricata* are less than two mm long, whereas they are two to three millimeters long in the *C. intermedia*. Although one can fairly easily distinguish the two species in young condition, using stem hairs and corolla appendage color at anthesis, experts insist on relying entirely on fruiting materials. In *C. muricata*, the shorter calyx lobes close over the nutlets and are relatively short, there are always four mature nutlets, and the nutlets

are broadly ovoid; in *C. intermedia* the longer calyx lobes are erect and project far above the nutlets, there are commonly less than four mature nutlets, and the nutlets are narrowly ovoid to broadly lanceolate. For *C. muricata*, on the inner (ventral) side of the nutlet the groove is essentially closed. The commonly cited character of style length relative to nutlet length is very difficult, and unreliable, to use.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson