

Cuscuta pacifica Costea & M. Wright var. *pacifica*, GOLDENTHREAD. Annual to short-lived perennial parasitic vine, halophytic, twining, attached to host stems with haustoria; shoots essentially leafless, orange (lacking chlorophyll), glabrous. **Stems:** threadlike and cylindrical, 0.15–0.3 mm diameter, orange, fleshy and easily desiccating, flexible. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade awl-like, 1–1.5 mm long, orange, fleshy, early deciduous but \pm persistent where subtending lateral (axillary) shoot. **Inflorescence:** headlike axillary cluster of condensed cymes, each cyme several-flowered, flowers with short pedicels to sessile and with knobby bumps on axes close to inflorescence, bracteate, glabrous; bractlet subtending pedicel awl-like, 1–1.5 mm long, orange tinged white; pedicel 0.5–2.5 mm long, expanding into flaring receptacle; bracteoles minute. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 3–4.3 mm across, in bud 2.5–4.5 mm long; **calyx** 5-lobed, funnel-shaped, 2–2.5 mm long; tube to midpoint, white to pale green aging brownish; lobes erect, overlapping at base, acuminate-triangular, whitish; **corolla** 5-lobed, white; tube bell-shaped, 1.5–1.7 \times 1.5 mm, green at base to white above; appendages at base of tube alternate with lobes = 2 wings along filaments with adjacent appendages by U-shaped tissue, narrowly tongue-like, 0.6–1.5 mm long, the wings white-fringed at free tip (sometimes fringed to base); lobes spreading, ovate, 1.5–2 \times 1.2–1.6 mm, white, somewhat cupped, often minutely toothed below tip; **stamens** 5, fused to end of tube alternate with corolla lobes; filaments 0.5–0.7 mm long, white, tapered to tip, aging bent inward touching stigmas; anthers exserted, basally dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.4–0.6 mm long, yellow, wider at base, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **nectary disc** beneath ovary, ringlike, 0.5–0.7 mm diameter, orange, with copious nectar covering ovary; **pistil** 1, short-stalked from calyx; ovary superior, inversely pear-shaped to broadly ellipsoid, 1–1.5 mm long, dark green at base to light green aging whitish above midpoint, with a deep, compressed pit at top, 2-chambered, each chamber with 2 green ovules; styles 2, arising near top of ovary pit, 0.5–0.8 mm long for each flower, crossed at base, white to pale green aging whitish; stigmas capitate, light greenish yellow to yellowish green, positioned slightly lower than anthers. **Fruit:** capsule, weakly dehiscent, 1(–few)-seeded, broadly ellipsoid, ca. 2 \times 1.5 mm, tannish brown with papery valves. **Seed:** helmet-shaped, 1.1–1.8 \times 0.7 mm (smaller if aborted), dull brown. Late June–late January.

Native. A twining, herbaceous parasitic with orange stems found exclusively in coastal salt marsh, e. g., at Malibu Lagoon and Pt. Mugu Naval Station, infecting fleshy host plants, especially *Jaumea carnosa* and *Salicornia pacifica*. *Cuscuta pacifica* var. *pacifica* formerly was treated as *C. salina* var. *major*. This halophyte may be found in fresh condition any month of the year, so that it is difficult to determine whether the plant is an annual or perennial, but each local population is certainly infected year after year. Goldenthrad flowers readily, and perhaps has no sharp flowering season in the mild maritime climate along the coastline.

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