

Dichelostemma capitatum Alph. Wood subsp. *capitatum*, BLUE DICKS. Perennial herb, geophytic, corm-bearing, fibrous-rooted, rosetted with 1–3 leaves, acaulous, 1–several-stemmed at base, scabose, 25–100+ cm tall; shoots with only basal leaves, 1 leaf per peduncle (scape), with leaves arched-spreading or laying on ground to ascending through branches of protective shrub, glabrous, slightly glaucous; corm covered with 1–5 fibrous, brown layers, spheroid to top-shaped, 4–16 mm diameter, whitish beneath splitting layers, cormlet fusiform to narrowly ovoid, sessile or on short stolon (< 10 mm long). **Stems (peduncles):** cylindric, 2–4 mm diameter, white belowground and green turning purplish near ground level. **Leaves:** alternate, simple with sheath; sheath closed, belowground, white; blade long-linear becoming as long as scape but dying from tip backward, 3.5–20 mm wide, dark green, keeled with a thickened, angular midrib, folded upward from midrib, minutely serrate with backward-pointing teeth on margins, initially long-tapered at tip, parallel-veined, slightly glaucous. **Inflorescence:** umbel-like, terminal on peduncle, dense and headlike, 15–37 mm across, 6–19(–30+)-flowered, of mixed bud sizes with several flowers opening each day, bracteate, glabrous; peduncle ascending, cylindric, to 1000 mm long, green turning purple to pale lavender near inflorescence, tough due to presence of a cylinder of fiber cells beneath green tissue; bractlet subtending each pedicel; **involucre** of 4–5 helically alternate bractlets of the outermost flowers, at least 3 fused at bases, appressed to umbel, ovate to broadly lanceolate, 8–17 × 2–6.5 mm, membranous strong purple to pink having 1–7 conspicuous, green or with deep red-purple parallel veins, aging papery; bractlet subtending inner pedicel tapered-lanceolate to threadlike and twisted or wavy (at least above midpoint), 2–4.5 mm long, < pedicel, membranous, the smallest with 0–1 vein, aging papery, scarious, and tannish, persistent among pedicel bases; pedicel ascending, (1–)1.5–7(–20) mm long, whitish to light or strong violet, typically persisting even when flower abscises. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 10–20 mm across; **perianth** 6-lobed, fused at base with 2 whorls of petaloid lobes (tepals), blue-violet to light violet (rarely all white); tube bell-shaped, 3.5–5.5 mm long, pale blue-violet to light violet, with 6 conspicuous veins (= midveins of lobes) alternate with 6 broad ridges, sometimes somewhat puckered; lobes ascending to spreading, ± dimorphic, 8–13 mm long, outer lobes elliptic and 3–7 mm wide, inner lobes obovate and 3.5–7.6 mm wide, each with a conspicuous midvein on outer (lower) surface, midrib darker violet or maroon sometimes aging brown; **stamens** 6, erect, dimorphic, fused to top of perianth tube along with 6 crown lobes; filaments decurrent on base of perianth, arising from top of perianth tube but < crown lobes, 1.3–2 mm long (outer stamens) and 0.4–1 mm long (inner stamens); crown lobes erect, narrowly oblong, 4–7 × 1–1.6 mm, > anthers, pale violet to white, acute at tip, with 1 lobe on each side of inner stamen, with inner surface of margin fused at base to filament; anthers basifixed, dithecal, arrow-shaped, 2–3 × 0.8–1.5 mm (outer stamens) and 3.5–4.9 × 1.4–1.8 mm (inner stamens), bright yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen bright yellow, copious, sticky; **nectaries** 6, at base of ovary, small, green; **pistil** 1, 8.5–11 mm long, terminating just below anther tips; ovary superior, ellipsoid, 4–5.5 mm long, purple to dark green with 6 lighter green stripes (above nectaries), 3-chambered, each chamber with 6–12 ovules attached to center; style 3-sided, in ×-section 3-lobed, translucent; stigma of 3 shallow crests with crystalline papillae. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, dehiscent by 3 valves, to 20-seeded, ovoid, ca. 8 × 4 mm, seeds oriented vertically and tightly packed. **Seed:** elongate and conspicuously 3-sided with 3 long

faces, 4–4.5 × 1.5 mm, black and somewhat glossy with surface of raised cells, with collapsed faces, narrowly winged along edges. Late December–mid-May.

Native. Perennial geophyte very common in scrub and grassy habitats throughout the range. *Dichelostemma capitatum*, formerly known as *D. pulchella* or as a species of *Brodiaea*, persists by means of deep-seated corms and produces a cluster of cormlets. The flower has a crown of white units, two opposite each other perianth lobe, fused with filaments of the outer stamens into a tube. This appears to be the only subspecies in range, because no specimen has yet been observed with fewer than six flowers per umbel and having very pale umbel bracts, features of subsp. *pauciflora* (Torrey) Keator, the subspecies found in the deserts of southern California. In range rare clones of *D. capitatum* have been observed with white flowers.

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