

*Eriogonum gracile* Benth. var. *gracile*, SLENDER WOOLLY WILD BUCKWHEAT. Annual, taprooted, rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, ± scapose with canopy = branched inflorescence, ascending to erect, 7–95 cm tall; shoots typically with wandlike photosynthetic inflorescence axes and only basal leaves (several cauline leaves), leaves typically senescent at flowering, woolly and tomentose. **Stems:** cylindrical, short–140 mm long (below inflorescence), often reddish, ± woolly to tomentose, sometimes more sparsely hairy above. **Leaves:** helically alternate (on robust individuals sometimes with 1 pair of opposite cauline leaves fused across node), simple, petiolate, without stipules (no ocrea); petiole 5–28 mm long, not winged, woolly; blade lanceolate to elliptic or oblong (oblanceolate) 10–47 × 5–15 mm, when water stressed folded upward from midrib, broadly tapered to tapered at base, entire and wavy on margins, acute to obtuse at tip, pinnately veined, tomentose, during summer often reddish, lower surface with dense white hairs. **Inflorescence:** involucre-enclosing unit (cyme) in terminal cymelike, 3-dimensional arrays, with ascending, wandlike first-order branches and second-order (third-order) branchlets, branchlets having 1–15 flowering nodes with 1 sessile involucre potentially at each node, involucre enclosing ± 25 flowers in a dense, headlike cluster, flowers emerging successively from involucre on exerted pedicels; bracts 3 at each reproductive or sterile node, appressed to stem and fused into a crownlike whorl, deep maroon, tube 0.5–1 mm long, lobes ± equal and scalelike, narrowly triangular, 1–3+ mm long, unevenly positioned in whorl, white-tomentose on inner surface; basal axis (stem) vertical, 2-forked or 3-forked at tip, producing 2 or 3 unequal to subequal primary axes (occasionally equal and appearing dichotomous), green and densely tomentose to somewhat woolly with internodes sometimes becoming glabrate; principal branches divergent, planed or not, with 1–10 ± straight, lateral branchlets more slender than principal axis, first 1–4 nodes on lateral branchlet without involucre, branchlets rarely with a third-order branchlet on plants > 60 cm tall. **Involucre:** vase-shaped and 5-toothed, 2–3.5 mm long, green or aging reddish on 5 low ribs, translucent between ribs, teeth deltate, ± 0.5 mm, externally typically glabrous, inner surface tomentose above midpoint; bractlets subtending pedicel 2, thin, ≤ pedicel, barbed; pedicel ± cylindrical and slender, 1.8–2.8 mm long, persistent, slightly exerted and hooked after flower abscises. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, at anthesis ± 2.5 mm across aging narrower; **perianth** 6-lobed, lobes (tepals) in 2 whorls, ± dimorphic; tube bell-shaped to hemispheroid, ± 0.5 mm long; outer lobes broadly obovate to roundish and cupped, inner lobes narrowly ovate-oblong to oblanceolate, 1 × ± 0.5 mm, outer lobes yellowish green with raised green or rose-red midstripe and sometimes blushed red, cells raised on lower surface, inner lobes white (pinkish) with yellow-green midstripe, both aging yellow with red midstripe with constriction around bases of lobes; **stamens** 9, arising from rim of perianth tube; filaments ascending, ca. 0.7 mm long, whitish, short-pilose at base and projecting from perianth tube; anthers versatile, dithecal, 0.3–0.4 mm long, pink fading white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid and strongly 3-angled, white and pink, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 3, ± 0.5 mm long, white, becoming strongly reflexed and appressed to developing fruit; stigmas spheroid, minute. **Fruit:** achene (diclesium), ovoid, 1–1.5 mm long, brown, sharply 3-angled above midpoint, glabrous, with faint netlike pattern on glossy brown surface. Late June–mid-November.

Native. Annual occasionally found in openings or disturbances in chaparral. *Eriogonum gracile* has green, photosynthetic reproductive axes while basal leaves have already senesced. The flower of this species is the smallest of any wild buckwheat in range. During hot summer days, the flower opens in the morning, when it becomes short-exserted from the involucre, and it spends the first day in a vertical position, having at that time outer lobes (tepals) different in color and shape than the inner ones (dimorphic). After the anthers are abscised (day two), the perianth closes somewhat and ages yellow while the flower becomes pendent, and at that stage the lobes of the corolla appear similar (monomorphic).

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