

Euphorbia serpyllifolia Pers. var. *serpyllifolia*, THYME-LEAVED SPURGE. Annual, taprooted, several–many-stemmed at base, forking unequally at each node and commonly developing a subsequent, intervening, axillary branch, the lateral branch typically diverging from main axis at 30–90° and thinner than main axis, ± spreading (often not touching ground), not rooting at nodes, prostrate or with domelike canopy, < 15 cm tall; monoecious; shoots 2-dimensional (plagiotropic), glabrous; latex white, copious. **Stems:** cylindrical, internodes < 1.5 mm diameter, flexible, green soon turning pinkish brown or deep red on exposed surfaces, not zigzagged, internodes typically 15–30 mm long, nodes swollen to 2.5 mm. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, short-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2 (4 per node), free or pair sometimes slightly fused across node on lower side, attached to node, narrowly acuminate, 1–1.5 mm long, whitish becoming pink to rose (if exposed), fringe-lobed or minutely cut, sometimes deeply 2-forked or divided to base; petiole slightly channeled, 1–1.5 mm long, curved to orient leaves horizontally; blade ovate to oblong or obovate, 3–10(–14) × 2.5–6 mm, oblique to 1-lobed (semicordate) at base, minutely serrate on margins above midblade, obtuse or rounded at tip with weak point (not notched), 3–5-veined at base and pinnately veined above midpoint, gray-green to dark green, upper surface lacking a dark reddish central area, lower surface lighter and glaucous. **Inflorescence:** cyathium (= involucre with 5–7+ staminate flowers and 1 pistillate flower), axillary, produced in leafy, cymelike arrays, glabrous; peduncle 0.5–1 mm long; cyathium < 1.5 mm wide (including spreading glands and appendages); **involucre** bell-shaped, ± 1 × 0.6–0.8 mm, green with white to light pinkish streaks below glands, glabrous, internally hairy below glands and on bract tips, with 5 bracts and 4 glands, the bracts of involucre fused most of length, acute to acuminate at free tips, tips ca. 0.4 mm long, with whitish, ciliate-fringed margins, the glands alternate with bracts (1 absent), nectar-producing, raised, transversely elliptic, 0.3–0.4 × 0.12–0.15 mm, fleshy, yellowish green to yellowish orange or reddish pink to light pinkish yellow, depressed in center, appendaged below gland, the appendage petal-like, 0.4–0.7 × 0.05–0.5 mm, narrower to wider than ascending glands on same cyathium, whitish to pale pinkish, scalloped to lobed (entire) on outer margin; staminate flowers 5–18 in 5 clusters of 1–4, each with pedicel-like stalk, each cluster associated with a bractlet; bractlet linear, ± 0.5 mm long, white, fringed approaching tip, the pedicel at anthesis cylindrical aging flattened, 0.6–0.8 mm long; pistillate flower on a pedicel-like stalk (gynophore), at anthesis gynophore short and erect, with only styles barely exposed, soon after gynophore elongating with maturing ovary exerted, slightly expanded and weakly 3-lobed beneath pistil. **Staminate flower:** reduced to 1 stamen; filaments ca. 0.2–0.4 mm long, light green; anther conspicuously dithecal, each sac broadly ellipsoid, ± 0.2 mm long, yellowish green becoming dark reddish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow. **Pistillate flower:** reduced to 1 pistil; ovary superior, 3-lobed broadly ovoid, 0.5–0.7 mm long, light green sometimes with pink to reddish edges, glabrous, 3-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles 3, 0.25–0.4 mm long, 2-branched at midpoint, light green to pinkish and grooved below fork, the branches club-shaped, fleshy, and ± colorless to transparent pink at tip; stigmas along upper edge to tip. **Fruit:** capsule, 3-seeded, 3-lobed and broadly triangular-ovoid, 1.3–1.5 × 1.4–1.8 mm, glabrous, elastically dehiscent along septa and chambers into 6 dry valves (some valve-pairs remaining attached at base) and expelling seeds. **Seed:** quadrangular-ovoid or -oblong, 0.8–1.2 × 0.5–0.7 mm, brown beneath frosty-tan, smooth

or very finely reticulate epidermis, sometimes slightly dimpled, transversely wrinkled on faces, grooved on obtuse, inner ridge, broadly acute on other angles; with oily endosperm. Mid-September–late November.

Naturalized. Annual to date collected at Malibou Lake (SMM) and at SMMNRA Peter Strauss Ranch in rocky creek beds, when surface water is absent. *Euphorbia serpyllifolia* var. *serpyllifolia* is a glabrous form and is otherwise very similar to var. *hirtula*, which is pubescent on shoots, inflorescences, and fruits.

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