

Gypsophila elegans M. Bieb., SHOWY BABY'S BREATH, ANNUAL BABY'S BREATH. Annual, taprooted, 1-stemmed at base, erect, 15–80 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, glabrous, somewhat glaucous. **Stems:** cylindric, to 2 mm diameter, light green, internodes 25–70 mm long, slightly swollen just above each node; hollow. **Leaves:** opposite decussate (rarely lower cauline leaves whorled), simple, sessile and paired fused across node concealing stem swelling, without stipules; blade narrowly oblanceolate or spatulate (lower leaves) to lanceolate (upper cauline), in range 15–75 × 2–16 mm, flat, fused at base ca. 0.5 mm above node, appearing entire but with minute teeth on margins, acute to obtuse at tip, with midrib conspicuous and raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** dichasial cyme, terminal, open and repeatedly forked, glabrous; paired axes divergent via swollen bases; bract subtending each branch and branchlet, the lowest leaflike with rounded base, reduced upward, the uppermost bractlet deltate, membranous; pedicel slender, 5–20 mm long, flared beneath flower. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 12–13 mm across, with receptacle extending above calyx as a short stalk (stipe), stipe 0.5–0.8 mm long, green, nectar-producing; **calyx** 5-lobed, 3–3.5(–5) mm long; tube cup-shaped, fused to midpoint, green, with a white triangular area below each sinus; lobes ascending, acute-triangular or rounded-obtuse, 1-veined with elliptic green center and wide white-membranous margins; **petals** 5(–7), arising at midpoint on stipe, short-clawed with ascending or spreading limb, in range 6–8 × 3–3.5 mm; claw < 1 mm long, greenish; limb obovate to heart-shaped, 3–4.5 mm wide, white with 3 yellowish green veins diverging from base, truncate and entire to shallowly notched at tip, lower surface minutely glandular near base; **stamens** 10 in 2 whorls, free, arising on lobes of stipe rim; filaments unequal, ascending, ± 4.5–5 mm long (outer stamens) and 3.5–4 mm long (inner stamens), white, hooked at tip toward center; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, oval, 0.6–0.7 mm long, white, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1, short-stalked; ovary superior, 4-lobed and squarish, ca. 2 × 1.5 mm at anthesis, glossy yellowish green, depressed at tip, 1-chambered with 12–16 ovules attached to center in 4 rows; styles 2, from depressed center at top of ovary, at anthesis ascending outward becoming longer, to 2.5 mm long and arched inward ± touching, yellowish, papillate and stigmatic 0.3 mm at tip. **Fruit:** capsule, dehiscent with 4 teeth, to 15-seeded, spheric, ca. 3.5 mm, valves slightly recurved. **Seed:** broadly kidney-shaped and lenticular, 1.2–1.5 mm long, notched at hilum, reddish brown, minutely scalloped on margins, finely sculptured with tiny bumps (tuberculate), the tubercles low convex, arranged in a concentric pattern and radially elongate. Late April–late May.

Waif. Annual first observed in 2005 in disturbed upland grassland in Malibu Creek State Park but later also found in the Hollywood Hills along Mulholland Highway between Coldwater Canyon and Laurel Canyon. *Gypsophila elegans* is a cultivated ornamental, and its occurrence in range probably was due to visitors disseminating seeds of commercial “wildflower” seed packets. If recognized, our plants fit var. *elegans*.
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