

Heliotropium curassavicum* L. var. *oculatum (A. Heller) Tidestr., SEASIDE HELIOTROPE, WILD HELIOTROPE, ALKALI HELIOTROPE. Perennial herb, ± fleshy, from a creeping, rhizomelike root, many-stemmed at base, prostrate or decumbent to ascending, 4–40 cm tall, to 80 cm long; shoots with only cauline leaves, glabrous, glaucous. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 5 mm diameter, light green; **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile to subsessile, without stipules; petiole typically absent or indistinct, occasionally to 3 mm long; blade oblanceolate or narrowly obovate to elliptic, 8–65 × 1.5–27 mm (the lowermost ones scalelike), long-tapered at base, entire, acute to obtuse at tip, inconspicuously pinnately veined, bluish green, glaucous. **Inflorescence:** panicle of spikes (spike), scorpioid, terminal, typically with 2–4 spikes commonly paired at end of peduncle or branches of peduncle, sometimes appearing 3-forked with only 1 spike developing on lower branch, spike typically > 20-flowered, 1-sided with ascending to erect flowers in 2 alternating rows on upper side, in fruit V-shaped or widely forked to spreading, flowers sessile and fruits subsessile, lacking bracts; axes with ridges descending from pedicels, glaucous; pedicel 0.2–0.8 mm long in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 4–5 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, ca. 2.5 mm long, light green and glaucous; tube < 0.3 mm long, with swollen bases of lobes; lobes erect, equal, awl-shaped, 2 mm long, fleshy; **corolla** 5-lobed, bell-shaped, persistent around fruit; tube + throat 3–3.5 mm long, tube green at base, narrowed above ovary, throat widening above, pale purple aging dark purple, with 5 pleats beneath calyx lobes and 5 ridges, the ridges darker purple and continuous with midveins of lobes; lobes typically equal, 1.3–1.5 mm long, slightly wider than long, white aging pale purple or light violet, with purple midvein; **stamens** 5, fused at top of corolla tube, included, sessile; anthers dithecal, 1.5 mm long, the widest at base, acuminate at tip, pale yellow, the tip sterile, white, pointed, minutely bumpy-papillate, longitudinally and inward dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1, mushroom-shaped, 1 mm long, green; ovary superior, slightly 4-lobed, glabrous, with 1 ovule per lobe; stigma ± sessile, resembling conic cap, ca. 1 mm wide, large enough to hide ovary, finely papillate and puberulent, persistent and black in fruit. **Fruits:** 0–4 nutlets, ± ovoid, 1.2–1.4 × 1 mm, brown, rounded and ± smooth on outer surface, with a broad, lateral scar, glabrous; hidden by persistent corolla and partially by a persistent calyx with fleshy, often erect lobes. Early April–early November.

Native. Perennial herb, a globally widespread species, in range occurring not only in saline habitats (beach dunes, in coastal salt marsh, and along brackish inlets) but also appearing occasionally in small populations throughout the SMM and SH near bodies of fresh water or where there was standing water during springtime. Our form tends to have a purplish “eye” (corolla throat) as the flower ages, but varieties generally are no longer recognized. In range, peak flowering of *Heliotropium curassavicum* is during hot, dry weeks of midsummer. During summer, pollination is presumably by Lepidoptera, but fruit set is low, so that less than one in five flowers may form any nutlets at all, and rarely does a flower produce a full set of four nutlets.

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