

***Malacothrix clevelandii*** A. Gray, CLEVELAND'S DESERT-DANDELION. Annual, taprooted, ± rosetted, 1–several-stemmed from base but with a central axis, branching above paniclelike, ascending to erect, to 45 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, ± glabrous or glabrescent; latex milky. **Stem:** main axis conspicuously ridged, to 1.5 mm diameter, with ridges descending from each leaf. **Leaves:** helically alternate, pinnately lobed and petiolate (basal leaves) and unlobed and sessile (upper cauline leaves), without stipules; petiole with winged margins, indistinct from blade; blade of basal leaves ± oblanceolate, typically ± 55(–100) mm long, the lobes few, often opposite and toothlike, 1–3 mm wide, thin, flat, pinnately veined with midrib raised on lower surface; blade of cauline leaves linear, to 45 mm long on lower plant gradually decreasing upward, upper cauline leaves and bracts 2–4-toothed at base. **Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal, open, paniclelike arrays, array sometimes flat-topped, head ligulate, in range 2.5–3.8 mm across, typically < 60-flowered, bracteate, glabrous; axes cylindric; bract subtending branch leaflike, to 30 mm long gradually decreasing upward grading to the bract subtending peduncle, typically with 1–5 basal, toothlike lobes but mostly 1 pair on ± lobed (auriculate) base projecting forward (not clasping), typically purple at tip; peduncle 9–30 mm long, puberulent becoming glabrescent, having 1–several bracts closely arranged, bracts highly reduced with the uppermost bract lacking teeth and awl-shaped, < 1.5 mm long; bracts subtending involucre ± 8 (calyculus), lanceolate, to 3.5 mm long; **involucre** cylindric, 5.5–7 × 2.5–3.8 mm becoming wider at base in fruit, phyllaries ca. 20 in 2 series, linear-lanceolate, ± 5.5 × 0.8 mm, membranous on margins, purple at tip; receptacle flat, without bractlets (paleae), papillate on top, hollow. **Ligulate flower:** bisexual, bilateral, ± 0.5 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** of 2 whorls, dimorphic, outer whorl of short and inconspicuous triangular scales and 1 smooth bristle, inner whorl of ca. 20 erect, colorless, soft, barbed bristles; **corolla** 5-toothed, in range 5–5.5 mm long, erect and projecting ± 1 mm beyond involucre; tube narrow, ± 3 mm long, white; limb 2.2–2.5 mm long, light yellow, glabrous except for teeth, the teeth triangular, ± 0.1 mm long, finely papillate; **stamens** 5, fused to top of corolla tube; filaments ± 0.4 mm long; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, exserted, basifixed, dithecal, 0.6–1 mm long, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, cylindric, ± 0.5 mm long, translucent-white, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style exserted, 2-branched, basal part pale yellow, the branches 0.4 mm long, yellowish green, papillate. **Fruits:** cypselae, with pappus, lacking beak, fruit body prismatic-cylindric and slightly curved, (1.2–)1.4–1.6 × 0.3 mm, olive brown, faintly 5-sided, 10-ribbed + 5 fainter ribs, glabrous; outer pappus of triangular scales ± 0.1 mm long + 1 smooth, white bristle ± 4.5 mm long; inner pappus deciduous and absent on mature fruit, 4–4.5 mm long, whitish. Late April–early June.

Native. Annual occasionally encountered on recently burned chaparral in SMM and the SH. *Malacothrix clevelandii* has light yellow ligulate flowers that are much shorter and more slender than its common white-flowered cousin, and so its identity is obscured until you realize that *M. clevelandii* has milky latex. This is a species that has two whorls of pappus, an outer whorl of minute scales plus one smooth bristle, and an inner whorl of soft bristles that are absent on the mature fruit.

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