

Malacothrix saxatilis (Nutt.) Torrey & A. Gray var. *tenuifolia* (Nutt.) A. Gray, CLIFF ASTER. Perennial herb, from a rhizomelike, woody taproot, 1–several-stemmed at base, spreading to ascending with numerous flowering lateral axes, in range 40–200+ cm tall; shoots with thin leaves easily wilted, sparsely cobwebby becoming glabrescent; latex milky; old taproot with cylinder of wood, brown. **Stems:** initially shallowly ridged soon becoming cylindrical, on the largest specimens 20+ mm at base, with ridges descending from each leaf, typically aging radish red; hollow. **Leaves:** helically alternate, mostly sharply and pinnately lobed, sessile, without stipules; blade oblanceolate to oblong (lower leaves) to elliptic or lanceolate grading into narrowly elliptic or linear leaves and bracts above, 50–200+ × 4–130 mm, the lobes to 80 mm long and widely spaced, clasping and winged to lobed (auriculate) at base, coarsely serrate or deeply pinnately lobed to short-toothed or entire (or several teeth only on auriculate base), lobes sometimes with several teeth, acute at tip, pinnately veined with thick and fleshy midrib raised on lower surface, becoming rose-tinged and with pink veins. **Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal, open, cymelike arrays with several heads in each ultimate cluster, in each cluster the first head overtopped by the next lower 1 or 2 (having longer peduncles), head ligulate, 20–43 mm across, of 35–100 flowers, closing before sunset when water-stressed, bracteate, sparsely woolly; bract subtending peduncle linear, 1–30 mm long, cobwebby to glabrous; peduncle 20–55 mm long, faintly striped to shallowly ridged with ridges descending from bracts, bracts along peduncle several, awl-like to narrowly linear-lanceolate, 1–3 mm long, sometimes becoming future bracts of cymelike clusters, ± woolly to glabrate; bracts at base of involucre 12–18+ (calyculus), appressed, awl-shaped to lanceolate, 2.5–5 mm long, with membranous margins, becoming red-tipped; **involucre** bell-shaped, 6–8.5 mm wide at base spreading to 14 mm wide at phyllary tips, phyllaries 13–30+ in 2(–3) series, phyllaries narrowly lanceolate to linear-acuminate, 7–12 mm long, light green with milky white margins and dark rose-red on raised midrib (at least approaching tip), glaucous, white and minutely papillate-hairy at tip; receptacle initially concave or flat aging slightly domed in fruit, ca. 2.5 mm wide, without bractlets (paleae), with minute teethlike projections between ovaries, hollow beneath receptacle. **Ligulate flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 1.3–2 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** dimorphic, outer pappus = rim with minute teeth, inner pappus of (15–)25–33 capillary bristles fused at base, white, the barbs on bristles (barbels) spreading with the longest below midpoint; **corolla** 5-toothed, 9–11.5(–20) mm long, white; tube cylindrical, 2.5–4(–6) mm long, finely 5-veined, with ascending, colorless uniseriate hairs approaching throat; limb ± linear-oblong, on the outermost flowers with a broad, deep rose stripe on back leading to the middle 3 teeth; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla at top of throat; filaments ± level of corolla cleft, 0.5 mm long, colorless; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, exserted, basifixed, dithecal, 3 mm long, 5-angled, light yellow with rose-red connective and sterile appendages at tip and tails at base, the appendages 0.3–0.4 mm long, narrowly rounded at tip, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white to pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, lacking beak, ellipsoid, 0.5–0.7 mm long, white, faintly 15-ribbed, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style exserted 2–5 mm beyond anthers, 9.5–12 mm long, white, **nectary** at base, yellow, and producing copious nectar, style 2-branched, the branches erect and appressed with just the tips spreading, 0.5–0.9 mm long. **Fruits:** cypselae, 5-angled oblanceoloid, 1.4–1.8 × 0.4–0.6 mm long, gray-brown to dark brown (blackish), straight to curved, 15-ribbed, minutely canescent; pappus of head hemispheric,

15–35 mm across, of 15–33 soft, capillary bristles fused at base but readily breaking apart and separating from fruit, 4–4.5 mm long, silvery white, barbels mostly near base; dry fruit with 30–33 minute teeth (outer pappus). January–December.

Native. Perennial herb common throughout the range in natural communities and in all types of disturbed habitats, wet or dry, sunny or shady, therefore appearing much like a weed. *Malacothrix saxatilis* can be found flowering somewhere in range any day of the year, but heads produced in dry locations and during summertime tend to be much smaller than those produced during wet springtime. The ovary has two sets of pappus, conspicuous, silky capillary bristles (inner pappus) surrounded by a rim with minute teeth, representing outer pappus; capillary bristles readily separate from developing fruits, so that cypselae at maturity then exhibit only the teeth.

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