

Malva parviflora L., CHEESEWEED, LITTLE MALLOW. Annual, taprooted, rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, with upright primary axis and shorter ascending to spreading branches, typically ascending to erect (prostrate if trampled), 10–205 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, with suntracking blades, densely pubescent to sparsely hairy (all parts on certain individuals), the hairs singly or doubly stellate and colorless with persistent, green, conic bases. **Stems:** somewhat ridged, to 15 mm diameter, with a broad ridge descending 2 internodes from each leaf, green often becoming red, tough, densely to sparsely stellate-hairy or nearly glabrate, if hairy later the persistent bases blisterlike. **Leaves:** helically alternate, palmately 7-lobed, long-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, broadly attached to stem at node, narrowly triangular to shallowly deltate, 2.5–6.5 × 3–5.5 mm, entire and ciliate to minutely short-dentate on margins with a hair terminating each tooth, acuminate to acute at tip, faintly parallel-veined, upper surface glabrous, lower surface stellate-pubescent or glabrate with stellate hairs near the basal margin, shriveling with age; petiole subcylindric with flattened upper side becoming slightly channeled approaching blade, 45–200(–250+) mm long, >> blade, tough, stellate-pubescent especially in channel on glabrate individuals, junction with blade pulvinuslike and transversely wrinkled, densely pubescent and reddish to red-violet; blade somewhat roundish to kidney-shaped, 20–105(–240) × 37–110+ mm, lobes broad with shallow sinuses, dull, ± cordate at base, crenate and often wavy to crisped on margins, odd-palmately veined with principal veins conspicuously raised on lower surface and blade tissue gathered, with scattered unbranched hairs and stellate hairs, upper surface sometimes becoming glabrescent. **Inflorescence:** condensed cyme, axillary, 1–5-flowered, commonly accompanied later by a lateral flowering shoot arising from the same axil, bracteate; peduncle absent; bractlet subtending pedicel absent; pedicel at anthesis ascending, 2–4 mm long increasing 2–4× in fruit (typically not reflexed), tough, flexible, stellate-hairy to glabrous, sometimes with minute glandular hairs; bracteoles (2–)3, fused to calyx below midpoint (= epicalyx), linear, at anthesis 2.5–4 × 0.2–0.4 mm increasing slightly in fruit, tapered at base, ciliate on margins with forked hairs. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 6–13 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, pleated in bud, densely stellate-pubescent but internally glabrous, persistent and initially enveloping developing fruit; tube deep cup-shaped, ca. 2.5 mm long; lobes ascending, broadly ovate, 2.2–3 × 2.1–3.6 mm increasing in fruit, entire and ciliate with unbranched hairs on margins, net-veined; **petals** 5, at base fused and domelike extending beneath and over ovary + fused with staminal tube; lobes spreading-ascending (when long) to erect (when short), ovate and broadly clawed to obovate or spatulate, 3.2–6 × 2–2.3 mm, ≥ calyx, stout base white with pink to pale or light lavender (white) lobes, notched-obovate at tip, each lobe with 5 or 6 faint veins, appressed against spreading or ascending calyx or ± folded inward, minutely papillate, the papillae the densest near the claw on upper surface; **stamens** ± 15, monadelphous (all fused for part of length) forming a column, fused to base of corolla; tube 1.5–2 mm long, white, flaring at base and enveloping ovary, glabrous or with a few short, downward-pointing hairs; filament free portions spreading to recurved, unequal, 0.3–0.6 mm long, forming a short, conic or hemispheric mass, white, glabrous; anthers dorsifixed, monotheical, transversely crescent-shaped, 0.3–0.7 × 0.3–0.9 mm, ivory white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white, sticky; **pistil** 1, 3–3.4 mm long; ovary superior, hidden beneath base of staminal column, subspheroid compressed top-to-bottom, ca. 1 × 1.5–2.5 mm, green, shallowly lobed, stellate-puberulent to glabrate, 9–11-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles

= number of chambers, fused at or below midpoint, greenish but becoming pink to light lavender approaching tip, free tips tentaclelike, style branches recurved 180° or more into anthers; stigmas to 0.8 mm long, each with ascending, pointed papillate hairs along inner side. **Fruit:** schizocarp, breaking into 9–11 dry, 1-seeded, indehiscent segments (mericarps), only partially concealed by an overarching, dry, veiny calyx 10–18.5 mm diameter; intact fruit tire-shaped, 7–10 mm across with depressed center, stellate-puberulent; mericarps transversely wedge-shaped and radially C-shaped, 2.3–3.1 × 1.8–2.6 mm, brown (green or purplish when immature), outer (curved) surface deeply cross-wrinkled and net-veined, very acute to winged and toothed along edges, lateral (radial) faces roundish in outline, 2–3 mm wide, typically with radiating ridges from middle of face to edge and continuous with tooth. **Seed:** plump C-shaped, 2–2.5 × 2–2.5 mm, fitting tightly within chamber, semi-glossy 2-tone brown or brownish olive, minutely wrinkled. Late November–late September.

Naturalized. Annual weed inhabiting disturbed habitats throughout the range. *Malva parviflora* in vegetative condition is too similar to *M. nicaeensis* to be properly identified, but its flowers have much shorter petals (< 6 mm long) that lack obvious nectar lines, and the petal claws are glabrous. *Malva parviflora* tends to have more fruit segments, frequently ten or eleven, which, with short corolla (i.e., *parviflora* or “little mallow”) is a fairly reliable character for the key, whereas harder-to-observe fruit segment features are less reliable.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson