

Malva pseudolavatera Webb & Berthel., CRETAN MALLOW. Biennial herb, taprooted, several-stemmed at base, ascending to decumbent, in range 30–180 cm tall; shoots with suntracking blades, soft-pubescent becoming glabrescent, the soft hairs typically with 1–4(–12+) arms < 1 mm long (stellate) and having persistent, bulbous bases. **Stems:** cylindrical to broadly smooth-ridged, to 21 mm diameter at base, with 2 grooves descending from each leaf, green, tough (stem fibers), ± zigzagged with long internodes, aging sparsely stellate-pubescent; thick stems ± hollow, pith white. **Leaves:** helically alternate, palmately 5-lobed or 7-lobed, long-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, broadly attached to stem at node, symmetrically or asymmetrically triangular to ovate-triangular or narrowly triangular, 4–14 mm long, often with 1 rounded lobe at base, entire to inconspicuously short-dentate below midpoint, acute to long-acuminate at tip, parallel-veined, pubescent, either deciduous or persistent and becoming stretched as stem enlarges; petiole ± cylindrical, 50–270 mm long, upper side sometimes somewhat flattened near base, tough, hairy like stem; blade ± roundish to heart-shaped, 50–180 × 40–205 mm, mostly < petiole, of basal leaves length < width, of cauline leaves length > width, lobes broad with shallow sinuses, cordate at base, crenate to dentate and often wavy on margins, odd-palmately (5-veined) 7-veined with primary veins raised and other veins somewhat sunken on upper surface and principal veins conspicuously raised on lower surface, with scattered stellate hairs and hairs more persistent along veins and on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** condensed cyme, axillary, commonly 3–6-flowered and appearing to lack peduncle, later accompanied by 1(–2) lateral flowering shoot arising from the same axil, bracteate, soft stellate-hairy throughout; pedicel cylindrical, 10–20 mm long, tough, flexible; bracteoles subtending flower 3 (epicalyx), fused to ± midpoint into a persistent, 3-lobed, cup-shaped structure, green and soft-hairy, the tube at anthesis 2.5–3.5 mm long including the portion fused to calyx, lobes appressed to calyx, broadly deltate or obtuse-ovate, 3–3.5 mm long, veiny, tube and lobes increasing to 2× in fruit and becoming a 3-lobed plate beneath fruit with its tube fused to calyx. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 25–33 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, at anthesis 7–8 mm long and often = bracteoles, increasing to 11 mm in fruit and appressed, green, densely soft stellate-hairy; tube bell-shaped, fused to midpoint to bracteole tube; lobes acuminate-ovate, 3–4 mm long, enlarging slightly and folded over thereby hiding fruit; **petals** 5, fused to expanded base of staminal tube, obovate with thickened clawlike base and conspicuously notched (emarginate), (10–)15–19 × 8–9.5 mm, light purplish pink to midpoint to slightly darker above with 3 strong reddish purple stripes, with a dense beard of stiff-pilose, white hairs to 1 mm long attached to margin of clawlike base, upper surface of claw with scattered, slender glandular hairs; **nectaries** 5, on expanded base of staminal tube beneath beard of stiff-pilose hairs (trapping nectar); **stamens** > 40, monadelphous (all fused part of length) forming an erect column bearing a dense cluster of anthers, 8–10 mm long; tube low-ridged cylindrical, intact column ca. 6 mm long, covered with colorless stellate hairs, column pale green at base to white above and free portions of filaments, filament free portions ascending to spreading, to 3 mm long, glabrous; anthers dorsifixed, monotheical, 0.5–0.7 mm long, pale purplish pink or whitish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, hidden beneath staminal column, wheel-shaped with conic beak, green, shallowly lobed, in range glabrous, (7–)10-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles = chambers, ascending, hidden within staminal column, nested within staminal column, ca. 3 mm long, green at base to greenish above midpoint,

glabrous; stigmas long-cylindric, 4.5–5 mm long, lavender-purple, densely papillate along inner side. **Fruit:** schizocarp, breaking into 7–10 dry, 1-seeded, indehiscent segments (mericarps), partially concealed by an overarching, dry calyx 10–11 mm diameter; intact fruit tire-shaped, 10–12 mm across, glabrous; mericarps transversely wedge-shaped and radially D-shaped, 4 × 4 mm, brown (green when immature), outer (curved) surface 2.5–3 mm wide, smooth, with rounded edges, lateral (radial) faces with only faint, radiating veins from middle of face to edge. **Seed:** snail-shaped, ca. 3 × 3 mm, fitting tightly within chamber, dull dark gray. Early March–mid-May.

Naturalized. Biennial herb known as a weed from near coastal localities in Malibu, such as near Zuma Beach, along Latigo Canyon Road, and in Solstice Canyon. *Malva pseudolavatera* formerly was treated as *Lavatera cretica*, which is a widespread plant originated from Mediterranean Europe. This has the vegetative structure of our other mallows, but typically larger leaves with only stellate hairs. However, it is easy to identify when blooming because the flowers, which open by 10 a.m., are much larger and very showy.

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