

Mirabilis laevis (Benth.) Curran var. *crassifolia* (Choisy) Spellenb., WISHBONE BUSH.

Perennial herb, dieback during late spring or summer drought, taprooted, several–many-stemmed at base, clumped, typically unequally forked with 1 branch continuing as the main stem and the other spreading as a subordinate, lateral shoot, occasionally equally branched with Y-shaped forks, trailing or decumbent to ascending, in range typically < 40 cm tall; shoots weakly woody at base, trailing shoots \pm 2-dimensional (plagiotropic), densely glandular-pubescent with a mixture of long and short gland-tipped hairs, scented like leaves of tomato (*Lycopersicon*); taproots several per clump. **Stems:** cylindric, to 5 mm diameter, green or becoming reddish to magenta on exposed surfaces, brittle, with short, backward-arching hairs and slightly backward to spreading long hairs, both hair types gland-tipped on younger tissue. **Leaves:** opposite and equally paired, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole slightly channeled, 1–15+ mm long; blade heart-shaped to broadly ovate or deltate, 8–35(–55) \times 4–35(–50) mm, dark green, cordate to truncate at base, entire and sometimes wavy on margins, acute to obtuse or rounded at tip, pinnately veined but often 3-veined at base and with principal veins raised on lower surface, surfaces with mixed long and very short, erect glandular hairs. **Inflorescence:** dichasial cyme, terminal but usually appearing axillary, (1–)several–many-flowered, with opposite lateral branchlets, bracteate, densely glandular-pubescent; bract subtending each branchlet leaflike, 2–22 mm long; pedicel ascending or recurved, 1–8 mm long, green, with an involucre of bractlets at tip; **involucre** subtending flower, 5-lobed, calyxlike, \pm bell-shaped, 5–6 \times 4.2–4.9 mm increasing in fruit (not increasing if ovary aborts), green but purplish red on margins and tips of lobes, outer surface glandular-hairy, inner surface pubescent; tube 5-ribbed; lobes ovate, 2.8–3.9 \times 1.8–2.6 mm, acute to rounded at tip. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 12–22 mm across; **perianth (calyx)** 5-lobed, corollalike, mostly magenta to reddish purple (pink or white), greenish from base to slightly above constriction; tube base enclosing and narrowly constricted above ovary, spheric to somewhat flattened spheroid (oblate), 1.7–2 \times 2–2.2 mm, green, glabrous; throat funnel-shaped, 8–11 mm long, 5-ribbed with each rib extending to sinus of lobes, hirsute with some capitate glandular hairs on outer surface, internally glabrous except densely pubescent at and slightly above constriction; lobes \pm heart-shaped, 1.5–3 \times 11–14 mm (when flattened), pubescent at base of sinus and tip of rib; throat + lobes after anthesis twisting and collapsing into a sticky ball atop ovary; **stamens** 5, fused at base as a crownlike collar symmetrically surrounding ovary (enclosed in calyx), exerted with anthers positioned on lower side of calyx; collar 5-lobed, \pm 1 mm long, fleshy, nectar-producing, each lobe abruptly tapered in a narrow filament; filaments alternate with calyx lobes, 9–13 mm long, white to pale pink, very thin where filaments pass through calyx constriction, expanding to 0.3 mm diameter, elastic, glabrous; anthers dorsifixed, plump dithecal with each sac kidney-shaped, 0.7–1.2 \times 0.6 mm, brilliant yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen brilliant to vivid yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior but appearing inferior because surrounded by thick perianth base, ellipsoid, 0.6–1 mm long, 1-chambered with 1 ovule attached to base; style exerted, 13–15 mm long, white; stigma broadly hemispheric-capitate, 0.5 \times 1 mm, with many thick papillate hairs, the hairs 2-forked or 3-forked, whitish below and pink at tips. **Fruit:** nutlike, indehiscent, with a spheroidal, 1-seeded fruit enclosed in the hardened base of the calyx (diclesium, anthocarp); diclesium broadly obovoid to oblanceoloid, 4.5–4.8 \times 2–3.8 mm, when immature mottled glossy light and

darker green, when mature mottled dull dark brown or gray and black with or without 10 paler, vertical stripes; mature inner fruit spheroid, fitting tightly within outer cover, ivory, fruit wall soft. Late November–mid-May.

Native. Perennial herb common especially on rocky slopes throughout the range, often with roots (several per clump) nested beneath a small boulder, especially where there are sandstone outcrops. *Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia* (formerly *M. californica*) resprouts during winter after the first heavy rain and dies back after the rainy season, or the plant may not emerge during an extreme drought year. Its leaves are heart-shaped and glandular.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson