

Penstemon spectabilis A. Gray var. *subviscosus* (D. D. Keck) McMinn, NOTABLE

PENSTEMON. Perennial herb, summer-dormant, several-stemmed at base, erect, 80–175 cm tall; shoots green, glabrous but glandular-pubescent in inflorescence, ± glaucous. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 9 mm diameter, smooth, internodes 15–85 mm long. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, petiolate (lower leaves) and sessile with paired blades completely fused across node above midplant (connate-perfoliate), without stipules; petiole V-channeled, to 18 mm long, flaring at base, with 0–3 lobes on each margin at base; blade lanceolate to ovate, 60–103 × 20–40 mm, broadly tapered at base (lower leaves) forming a broad union with other leaf at node (most cauline leaves), dentate to short-dentate on margins, acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib slightly sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** panicle of dichasial cymes paired at nodes, terminal, main axis typically having 8–18 nodes, to 900 mm long, many-flowered, each cyme 1–8-flowered, spreading, with erect pedicels and horizontally positioned flowers, bracteate, green parts somewhat glaucous; main axis straight, internodes typically 25–35(–70) mm long, glabrous; bract subtending cyme = 2 opposite and connate-perfoliate leaflike bracts, decreasing upward, the uppermost bracts narrowly triangular, 3 mm long, with margins often reflexed; axes of cymes sparsely glandular-pubescent; bracts at each fork 2, opposite and connate-perfoliate, to 5 mm long decreasing upward; bractlet subtending pedicel not fused to another if in pairs, narrowly triangular and somewhat recurved at tip, 1.5–2 × 1 mm, green often with purple tip, entire and short-ciliate on margins, acuminate at tip; pedicel 5–10(–18) mm long increasing 2× mm in fruit, green to purplish red, glandular-pubescent especially on upper side. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 15–20 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, 3.5–6.3 mm long, sparsely glandular-pubescent; tube cup-shaped, 1 mm long; lobes overlapping, ovate, 2.7–3.3 mm wide, green with purple at tip, broadly membranous on margins and slightly jagged approaching tip; **corolla** 2-lipped, 5-lobed, 25–27(–33) mm long, glandular-pubescent; tube 7–8.5 × 4–4.5 mm, wide around ovary and constricted 2.5–3 mm below throat, dark reddish purple at base, along top grading to purplish pink, paler on lower side; throat 6.5–9 mm wide at orifice, orifice wider than long, light purple but paler on lower side, internally pubescent on roof, purple-veined or with lines on floor, bearded with tangled long hairs near lower lip approaching each lobe, with only a few hairs below lateral lobes, the bearded area sometimes yellowish; upper lip 2-lobed, lobes compressed-rounded (oblate), ca. 6 × 8 mm, violet to blue, erect or arching backward, glabrous on front, sparsely pubescent on back; lower lip 3-lobed, lobes reflexed at ca. 45° to orientation of tube, roundish, 7–8 mm long, violet fading at base, pubescent below midpoint on back, glabrous on front, the central lobe narrower than lateral lobes; **stamens** 4 fertile + 1 staminode, 2 stamens fused to base of tube and included (upper stamens) and 2 fused to top of tube and exerted (lower stamens), dimorphic; filaments with free portion 15–17 mm long terminating at midthroat (upper stamens) and ± 13 mm long terminating almost at throat orifice (lower stamens), curved and twisted to become close to roof of throat, purplish red and yellow at base, white in middle, lavender to violet approaching anther, somewhat flattened; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, broadly elliptic in outline and horseshoe-shaped, 2–2.5 mm long, creamy white becoming light violet, at base deeply lobed, not strongly papillate on margins, sparsely glandular-puberulent, longitudinally dehiscent across top, with sacs becoming ⊥ to filament after dehiscence; pollen white or pale lavender; staminode fused to top of tube between upper stamens, bent at base of free

portion, extending to edge of throat above middle lobe or slightly exserted, ca. 14 mm long, white most of length with 2 lavender markings separated by white on lower side of expanded tip, pressed to floor of throat, glandular-hairy at base; **nectary disc** beneath ovary, ringlike, to 0.2 mm long, green; **pistil** 1, ca. 19 mm long; ovary superior, narrowly ovoid to conic, 3–4.5 × 1.6–1.8 mm, green but whitish at tip (tip aging reddish), somewhat compressed ⊥ septum above midpoint, glabrous and glossy, 2-chambered, each chamber with many ovules attached at center; style mostly straight but arched at tip, 14–15 mm long, white, slightly thickened at tip, glabrous; stigma minute. **Fruit:** capsule, septicidal later loculicidal, 4-valved, many-seeded, somewhat compressed-conic, 10–14 mm long, brown, valves somewhat veiny and with low midridge. **Seed:** irregularly angled with narrow and broad wings along edges, 1.4–2.2 mm long, black with faces shallowly and irregularly honeycombed. Mid-April–early June.

Native. Perennial herb encountered occasionally in chaparral and coastal sage scrub. *Penstemon spectabilis* var. *subviscosus* is, as its name suggests, one of the showiest late-spring flowers in range, and in rainy years can be as tall as the observer. It should be easy to distinguish from other local species of penstemons, but where a population occurs with individuals of the red-flowered *P. centranthifolius*, interspecific hybrids can be produced (so-called *Penstemon ×parishii*) when both parents are visited by the same pollinator. In range some hybrids have been collected that mostly resemble *P. spectabilis* although they are somewhat intermediate in vegetative and reproductive features of the two parental species. Because interspecific hybrids have arisen repeatedly and independently many times, the hybrid name should no longer have formal standing in current classifications.
B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson