

Phacelia distans Benth., COMMON PHACELIA, FERN-LEAF PHACELIA. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, typically 1-stemmed at base, ascending to decumbent, 15–80 cm tall; shoots hirsute throughout, the hairs long and stiff with thickened bases on the longest hairs, glandular-hairy in the uppermost canopy, the glandular hairs short and slender-stalked. **Stems:** cylindric, < 3 mm diameter, ± straight, green or purplish on exposed sides, scabrous from persistent hair bases, densely glandular approaching inflorescence; ± solid. **Leaves:** helically alternate, mostly 1-pinnately compound (sometimes appearing 2-pinnately compound) with 4–6 lateral leaflets per side, petiolate, without stipules (basal leaflets sometimes resembling stipules); petiole channeled, 3–70 mm long, green to reddish, often with shorter hairs in channel; blade 15–130 mm long, rachis channeled and pubescent like petiole; blades of lateral leaflets or lobes often paired (subopposite), spreading, with or without petiolules; petiolules < 1.5 mm long; blades of leaflet ± oblong in outline, 5–30 × 3–10 mm, 3–5-lobed per side, lobes paired or not, ascending, deeply serrate on margins, pinnately veined with raised principal vein to each lobe on lower surface, dull, hirsute to sericeous. **Inflorescence:** branched cyme, terminal on main and each lateral shoot, cymes typically in clusters of 2–3 branches, each branch > 25-flowered, 1-sided, buds and open flowers dense on a coiled rachis at tip, flowers subsessile, lacking bracts, hirsute and glandular-hairy; bract subtending inflorescence = upper cauline leaf; peduncle cylindric, typically < 20 mm long, hirsute and puberulent with nonglandular and glandular hairs, appearing densely short-pilose after losing colorless glandular heads; axis initially forked, becoming ascending, the branches diverging in fruit; pedicel < 1 mm long increasing to 1.5× in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 6.5–12 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, hirsute and densely glandular-pubescent; tube shallowly cup-shaped, 0.5 × 1 mm; lobes ± dimorphic, typically with the outward-facing lobe narrowly elliptic, 5–6.2 × 1.2–1.4 mm, other lobes linear to lanceolate-linear, 0.5–0.6 mm wide (rarely having 1 or 2 short lobes), all lobes increasing nearly 2× and linear in fruit, green or with reddish purple tips and margins, acute (rounded) at tip, outer surfaces hirsute with finer, shorter straight hairs, inner surfaces with fewer glandular hairs; **corolla** 5-lobed, broadly funnel-shaped to bell-shaped, 6–9 mm long, in bud with 5 conspicuous, deep vertical dimple opposite calyx lobes; tube 4–4.8 mm long, with 2 scales at each stamen base, white below midpoint but with 5 dark violet spots opposite each stamen at upper level of scales, white and violet in an irregularly spotted pattern on throat; lobes ± round to slightly compressed (oblate), (3–)3.5–4.8 × 4.2–5 mm, violet (approaching blue), inner surface glabrous, outer surface finely short-pilose on 1 or 2 lobes exposed in bud, violet with darker dendritic veins; scales ± lanceolate, free at short, acute tip, each pair collarlike around filament with a lateral edge vertically attached to tube for most of its length and the other edge fused with inner side of filament base; **stamens** 5, fused at base of corolla tube; filaments in bud arched inward becoming exserted, at anthesis unequal, ± straight, 4.5–8.5 mm long, moderate violet, 3-sided, glabrous; anthers versatile, dithecal, 1.1–1.6 mm long, deep violet, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light violet to pale lavender; **nectary disc** surrounding base of pistil, platformlike, ca. 0.9 mm diameter, > ovary, pale green; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, 1 × 0.6 mm long, weakly 2-lobed, covered by ascending, stiff, colorless hairs, appearing ± 2-chambered with 4 ovules; style exserted, 6–8 mm long, 2-forked 1–1.6 mm above ovary, below fork hairy, sparsely glandular near base, the branches ascending, to 6.4 mm long, light lavender to pale violet; stigma terminal, at level of anthers, minute. **Fruit:** capsule,

loculicidal, 2–4-seeded, compressed-spheroid to compressed-ovoid, 2.2–3 mm long, short-beaked, with ascending hairs mostly above midpoint. **Seed:** 1/4 sphere (= 2 concave faces and outer face convex), 2–2.5 × 0.9–1.4 mm, reddish brown to dark brown, deeply pitted and netlike, with angles of network outwardly pointed. Late January–late July.

Native. Annual occurring occasionally throughout the range, although it is not as common as several other phacelias. *Phacelia distans* produces flowers that are blue-violet but at a glance are considered essentially blue. This is the first species of *Phacelia* to flower in range. A species that might be confused with common phacelia is *P. tanacetifolia*, a desert species that has scarcely been observed in range.

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