

Platystemon californicus Benth. Annual, taprooted, several-stemmed at base, branched along main axis, \pm ascending, in range 10–30 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, stiff-pilose with spaced hairs (sometimes 2 fused at base) and hairs having thickened bases; latex colorless. **Stems:** elliptic-cylindric, to 3.5 mm diameter, glaucous, initially sparsely pilose becoming glabrescent. **Leaves:** helically alternate at the lowest nodes, switching to opposite or whorled on upper stem, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade linear to lanceolate-linear, 30–100 \times 1.7–6(–8) mm, entire and remotely ciliate with long hairs on margins, acute to rounded at tip, appearing parallel-veined and 3-veined or 5-veined from base, the midrib sometimes thicker and sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, glabrous (lower cauline leaves) or upper surface pilose (upper cauline leaves). **Inflorescence:** flowers solitary, terminal, on long peduncle (pedicel), lacking bracts, conspicuously stiff-pilose; peduncle (34–)150–250 mm long, green, becoming linearly mottled with reddish orange or red, the hairs white and mostly 2–3 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, typically 13–16 mm across, erect at anthesis; bud nodding, ellipsoid, 5.5–7 \times 4–5 mm; **sepals** 3, abscising as soon as flower opens (caducous), overlapping, \pm obovate and cupped, 5.5–7 \times 3–4 mm, green becoming dark reddish from base to tip, hooded, membranous on margins, the membranous portion wider above midpoint of the overlapped side, narrowly membranous on overlapping margin, \pm 5-veined from base, sparsely and coarsely villous or pilose with ascending to spreading hairs; **petals** 6–8, overlapping, spreading to form a dish-shaped corolla, obovate to elliptic, in range 8–11 \times 3.8–7 mm, creamy white except at base where green and grading to yellowish approaching tip, broadly tapered at base, entire, rounded to obtuse at tip, 4–6 veined at base, the veins greenish sometimes becoming reddish and forking and fading toward the tip; **stamens** 70–85, free; filaments ascending, unequal, narrowly oblanceolate, 3.5–4.5 \times 0.4–0.9 mm; anthers basifixed, dithecal, linear, 1.6–2 \times \pm 0.2 mm long, creamy white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, in range composed of 15–16 units (carpels) fused along sides and forming a barrel-shaped cylinder with a hollow center and open top, 2.5–2.8 \times 1.7 mm, glabrous, ribbed with 1 rib per unit and each unit with 2 placentae and 3–5 ovules per placenta; styles absent; stigmas 15–16, ascending to spreading, \pm linear and slightly tapered to tip, 2–2.5 mm long elongating to 4.5(–8) mm long in fruit, inrolled, papillate. **Fruit:** schizocarp, capsulelike, dehiscent, many-seeded, 11.5–16 \times \pm 4.5 mm, deeply grooved between units and bulging at each seed, glabrous, splitting lengthwise first along grooves into strips, later breaking between seeds to form 1-seeded segments, the seed segment 0.7–1.7 \times 0.7–1 mm, straw-colored. **Seed:** kidney-shaped to ellipsoid, 0.6–1 \times 0.4–0.7 mm, glossy brown (black), smooth; often remaining within fruit segment; aril absent. Late March–early May.

Native. Annual occasionally found in sunny, lightly disturbed grassy openings in chaparral and coastal sage scrub in the SMM. *Platystemon californicus*, called cream cups, is easily recognized from its nodding bud atop a pilose peduncle (pedicel). The fruit of *Platystemon* is unique in the plant world, because it is a schizocarp that splits lengthwise into strips, while still attached to the receptacle, and after falling then the strips break horizontally into one-seeded units.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson