

Psilocarphus tenellus Nutt., SLENDER WOOLLY MARBLES. Annual, fine-taprooted, several-stemmed at base, diminutive prostrate plant, 1.4–3(–6) cm tall; monoecious; shoots cobwebby to woolly. **Stems:** cylindric, 0.5 mm diameter, internodes 0.8–10 mm long, glabrous at base, appressed woolly above. **Leaves:** opposite decussate (pseudowhorled subtending heads = capitular leaves), simple, sessile and pair fused at base, without stipules; blade of cauline leaves linear-oblong to oblong, 3.5–7.5 × 0.7–1.3 mm, entire, and grayish green and sparsely cobwebby becoming glabrescent, blade of capitulate leaves oblong to oblong, 2–5.5 × 1–2(–3) mm, acute or obtuse with tannish to reddish point at tip, with only midrib apparent, cobwebby. **Inflorescence:** heads, terminal and solitary or in cymelike arrays of several leafy shoots, head disciform, spheric, 1.5–2 × 1.7–2.7 mm, of 10–30 pistillate peripheral flowers in several series and 3–6 staminate central flowers, flowers sessile or short-stalked, bracteate, woolly-tomentose; peduncle 0–3.5 mm long; **involucre** and phyllaries absent; receptacle obovoid and peglike, ca. 0.5 mm long, with bractlets (paleae), palea subtending pistillate flower folded-obovate (conduplicate) to D-shaped flattened side-to-side or ± inflated and wedge-shaped, 0.9–1.4 × ca. 0.6 mm, densely woolly-tomentose, with a scarios, cordate beak extending 0.5 mm beyond tip; palea subtending staminate flower absent. **Staminate flower:** radial, 0.4 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** absent; **corolla** (4–)5-lobed, 1–1.2 mm long; tube green; throat yellowish or yellowish green; lobes spreading, triangular, dark red to dark purplish red; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla ca. 0.1 mm from base; filaments 0.35 mm long, translucent; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, partially exerted, basifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.3 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, with sterile ovary but with a thicker and somewhat showy style; style 1.3 mm long, 2-branched, whitish but purplish red just below branches, the branches exerted ca. 0.3 mm, purplish red, finely papillate. **Pistillate flower:** radial, 0.2 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** absent; **corolla** diminutive, ca. 0.7 × 0.1 mm, whitish translucent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, ca. 0.7 × 0.2 mm, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style 0.8 mm long, 2-branched, the branches ± 0.4 mm long. **Fruits:** cypselae, each attached to and dispersed with palea, without pappus, ± obovoid, 0.6–1.2 mm long, brown; palea veiny and visible through wool. Mid-February–early May.

Native. A tiny annual probably unnoticed by most hikers, growing on bare patches, so mostly observed along trails through chaparral in SMM and SH. There is no way to determine how common is *Psilocarphus tenellus* because it is ephemeral as well as diminutive, and does not commonly germinate in dry years. The flowering plant is difficult at a glance to distinguish from the more abundant *Stylocline gnaphaloides*. *Psilocarphus tenellus* is most easily identified as the gnaphalioid having opposite leaves, heads that resembles woolly marbles sitting on rosettes of leaves (capitular leaves), and paleae that are veiny.

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