

Senecio vulgaris L., COMMON GROUNDSEL. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, ascending to erect or nodding (somewhat suntracking), 6–52 cm tall; shoots initially ± cobwebby-tomentose especially at leaf bases and in leaf axils, aging sparsely hairy to glabrescent, the hairs loose, colorless, weak, composed of ± elongated beadlike cells. **Stems:** ridged, to 3.5 mm diameter, with 3 ridges descending from each leaf, lower stem often purple, aging glabrescent. **Leaves:** helically alternate (the first 2 leaves opposite with pair fused across node), unlobed (lower leaves) and pinnately lobed, ± petiolate (lower cauline leaves) and sessile and commonly clasping (upper cauline leaves), without stipules; petiole weakly defined, to 15 mm long, ± flattened on upper side, winged and grading into blade; blade ovate to oblanceolate or oblong to obovate, (4–)20–100 × (1–)5–20 mm, slightly fleshy, long-tapered at base (lower leaves), rounded to cordate at base with clasping lobes to 5.5 mm long (upper leaves), unevenly dentate and somewhat crisped on margins, lobes deep or shallow, ± opposite to alternate, pinnately veined with midrib conspicuously sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, sparsely short-cobwebby (glabrous). **Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal, cymelike array (solitary), array ascendingly branched with several–13(–20) heads or unbranched with 1 head (diminutive individual), head discoid, (2–)3–6 mm across, of (13–)40–60+ flowers, bracteate; bract subtending array = dentate or lobed cauline leaf with clasping base; axes green (pinkish), loosely dense-tomentose (glabrous), finely ridged, peduncle 2–25+ mm long; bracts along axis to 15, 1 near midpoint, others helically alternate, bracts subtending involucre (= calyculus) narrowly lanceolate to awl-shaped, 1–2.5 mm long, dark purple-tipped to black-tipped; **involucre** cylindric, (6–)7–9 × (2–)2.5–4 mm, becoming conic or urn-shaped as fruits develop, phyllaries (8) ca. 21 ± in 1 series, linear, (4–)5.5–7.5 mm long, green-striped with membranous margins, at anthesis some dark purple-tipped or black-tipped or all without dark tips, glabrous, having tips arched over and concealing flowers in bud; receptacle flat, without bractlets (paleae), with shallow pits, hollow beneath receptacle. **Disc flower:** bisexual, radial, 0.8 mm across, 5.5–7(–10) mm long, extending slightly beyond phyllaries; **calyx (pappus)** of numerous capillary bristles, ≤ corolla length, thin, silky white, with minute ascending barbs (visible at 30×); **corolla** (4–)5-lobed, 4–5 mm long, glabrous; tube narrowly cylindric, 2.5–3.5 × 0.25 mm, pale green; throat cylindric and slightly wider than tube, 1–1.5 × 0.35–0.4 mm, yellow; lobes ± erect, acute, typically 0.25–0.3 mm long, yellow with green veins; **stamens** 5; filament fused to corolla at base of throat, ca. 1 mm long; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, with tips scarcely exerted, basifixed, dithecal, ± 1.5 mm long, yellow with purplish connective, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, cylindric to narrowly club-shaped, ± 1.5 mm long, nearly glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style eventually exerted to 0.8 mm (after pollination), 2-branched, the branches spreading and stigmatic, yellow, flattened top to bottom, long-papillate on truncate tips. **Fruits:** cypselae, straight-cylindric, 2.3–2.6 × 0.3–0.4 mm, red-brown, shallowly 8–10-ribbed, minutely scabrous on ribs; intact pappus mass spheric, colored like dandelion (*Taraxacum*), bristles 4–6.5 mm long. January–December.

Naturalized. European annual observed commonly, especially during winter and spring, in disturbed and waste areas throughout the range, but also frequently encountered on grassy slopes with many native species and in herbaceous communities after chaparral and coastal

sage scrub are burned. *Senecio vulgaris* mostly is 1-stemmed and erect. The discoid head has many black-tipped bracts, starting on the peduncle, then subtending the head (calyculus), and often including at least some phyllaries. Black phyllary tips distinguish *S. vulgaris* from other species of the genus having instead bracts with green tips. A population of slender, diminutive plants was found on the flat at Virgenes Reservoir, Westlake Village, growing with *Vulpia myuros*; these individuals had essentially glabrous shoots with tiny leaves, they were less than ten centimeters tall and have just one terminal, narrow, erect head, and the head had only eight inner phyllaries and thirteen disc flowers, some of which had just four corolla lobes.

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