

Spergularia macrotheca (Cham. & Schltdl.) Heyhn. var. *macrotheca*, STICKY SAND-SPURRY. Perennial herb, many-stemmed at base from branched caudex with a stout, woody taproot, prostrate to decumbent, in range 5–25 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, leaves generally not conspicuously tufted at node, somewhat fleshy, not glaucous, glandular-hairy with stalked hairs having small, colorless heads. **Stems:** elliptic in \times -section, conspicuously swollen at and around node, to 2.5 mm diameter but to 2 \times wider at swellings, tough, internodes to 35 mm long, with scattered glandular hairs. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, \pm sessile, with stipules; stipules 2 per node, broadly attached to stem at node, ascending to erect, long-acuminate and triangular to ovate, 5.5–9+ mm long, scarious, with glandular hairs on lower (outer) surface, persistent and splitting from base upward with expansion of swelling; petiole absent or indistinct, to 1 mm long, whitish, and channeled; blade hemi-cylindric linear, to 69 \times 1.3–3 mm, entire, acuminate with short bristle point at tip, 1-veined but venation obscure, uniformly glandular-hairy, upper surface somewhat shallowly channeled. **Inflorescence:** dichasial cyme, terminal and axillary, open, many-flowered, aging conspicuously jointed, flowers alternate, glandular-hairy on green surfaces; terminal cyme commonly equally forked (dichotomous) at lower nodes and with a dominant axis above (sympodial), axillary cymes sympodial; bracts subtending each fork 2, \pm fleshy, narrowly lanceolate, 2–3.5 mm long, the shorter bract subtending pedicel, each with 2 stipules as on leaves; pedicel ca. 2 mm long increasing $>$ 2 \times in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 12–14 mm across (spreading sepals), dish-shaped and horizontal; receptacle (hypanthium) inversely conic, at anthesis ca. 0.5 mm long increasing in fruit, with a deep purple spot between each sepal, the spots also on overlapping basal margins of adjacent sepals; **sepals** 5 (also treated as calyx lobes) spreading, narrowly ovate, 2–4 mm long increasing to 2 \times in fruit, rounded on back, green but white-membranous on margins to rounded tip; **petals** 5, cupped-ovate, 5–6 \times 4–5, $<$ sepals, deep rose or reddish purple with white base, rounded at tip; **stamens** 9–10, free, subequal; filaments ascending, fleshy, lanceoloid tapered to a thin tip, 2.4–3.9 mm long, to 0.9 mm diameter, whitish to pale yellowish green but slightly darker at base, glabrous, with blistery epidermis (colliculate), becoming flattened when dry; anthers versatile, dithecal, oblong, 0.5–1 \times 0.4 mm, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, obscurely stalked; ovary superior, ovoid, ca. 3 \times 1.5 mm, green, 1-chambered with many ovules on a free central placenta; styles (2–)3, initially appressed later ascending, in range 0.6–1 mm long, green, stigmatic and papillate above midpoint on inner face, smooth on outer face. **Fruit:** capsule, dehiscent by 3 valves tip to base, many-seeded, ovoid, in range 6.7–7 \times 3.8 mm, \geq calyx, straw-colored, acute at tip. **Seed:** commonly with marginal wing and roundish in outline (lacking wing), seed compressed-ovoid, 0.4–0.6 mm long, light brown to light reddish brown, surface generally minutely papillate; wing encircling seed scarious, 0.1–0.2 mm wide, pale reddish brown and wavy. Early March–early September.

Native. Perennial herb reported from sandy coastal strand and salt marsh. *Spergularia macrotheca* is the species in range with the longest leaves, which are also somewhat fleshy, and shoots are covered with glandular hairs, but are not as viscid as are shoots of *S. villosa*, the other perennial species. Both species have petals distinctly shorter than the sepals. *Spergularia macrotheca* var. *macrotheca* has deep rose or reddish purple petals, longer styles (mostly $>$ 0.6 millimeters), and a brownish wing on the seed (if wing is

present), whereas *S. villosa* has white flowers, short styles (0.4–0.6 millimeters long), and a white wing on the seed. However, in range occurs a coastal bluff population of *S. macrotheca* with white flowers, which would normally be keyed out as var. *leucantha* (Greene) B. L. Robins.; the styles are not long enough to be that and the petals of *S. macrotheca* var. *leucantha* should be as long or longer than the sepals. Assuming the varieties are valid, we are treating the white-flower plants in range as forms of var. *macrotheca* lacking the purple anthocyanin pigments for petals and spots on the flower.

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