

Verbena bracteata Lag. & Rodr., PROSTRATE VERVAIN. Annual, taprooted, several-stemmed at base, in range decumbent to ascending, 8–30 cm tall; shoots with mostly cauline leaves, sparsely hirsute with scattered stiff hairs 0.5–1 mm long. **Stems:** somewhat 4-sided with opposite sides either convex or concave, to 3 mm diameter, internodes to 80 mm long, often becoming purplish red on the lowermost stem. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, unlobed and serrate (basal leaves) and \pm 3-lobed (cauline leaves), petiolate with pair connected by faint ledges across node, without stipules; petiole winglike and indistinct from blade, to 10 mm long, with vein from blade midrib raised on lower side; blade of unlobed basal leaves elliptic to obovate, 10–13 \times 4.5–7 mm, tapered at base, entire below midblade and serrate above midblade, blade of cauline leaves narrowly obovate to oblanceolate in outline, 10–45 \times 7–25 mm, tapered to long-tapered at base, generally with 2 lateral lobes near base, the lateral lobes ascending, asymmetric and \pm oblanceolate, 5–10 mm long, with 0–5+ teeth, the central lobe or unlobed blade symmetric obovate to oblanceolate, to 16 mm wide, serrate mostly above midpoint, not inrolling, pinnately veined with 3 principal veins near base (3-lobed leaf) and principal veins sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, \pm hirsute. **Inflorescence:** spike, terminal, densely flowered, \pm cylindrical, 10–40 \times ca. 7 mm, axis elongating somewhat in fruit, flowers mostly helically alternate (at lower nodes subopposite), bracteate, hirsute; peduncle short; rachis with ridges descending from bractlets, internodes in fruit $<$ 3 mm long; bractlet subtending flower lanceolate, at anthesis 2.5–5 \times 1 mm with length increasing 2–3 \times becoming narrowly lanceolate to linear-lanceolate in fruit, green, hirsute, with conspicuous raised midvein on lower side, lacking glands, persistent with or without associated fruit, ascending and cupped around calyx and fruit; pedicel short or absent, aging brownish or dark purplish red and persistent as stub after dead flower or fruit abscises. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 2–2.5 mm across; **calyx** unequally 5-lobed (toothed), at anthesis 2–2.5 mm long increasing to 3 mm in fruit; tube the shortest on upper side and the longest on lower side, pleated and 5-ribbed with green ribs and translucent furrows, hirsute with longer hairs along ribs; teeth unequal, 0.1 mm long (upper side) and 0.3 mm long (lower side); **corolla** weakly 2-lipped and \pm 5-lobed to \pm radial and 5-lobed, narrowly trumpet-shaped (salverform), 4–5 mm long; tube cylindrical but slightly constricted at top, 1.2–1.5 mm long, white or white at base to purple above, internally puberulent as a band beneath anthers; throat slightly expanding from tube and sometimes slightly bent, pale lavender and with a white, flaring upper throat or sometimes constricted at orifice, internally puberulent with upward-pointing and white hairs, having a discontinuous ring of hairs at orifice and the base of lobes; lobes unequal (2-lipped) or subequal (radial), upper lip weakly defined but often white with 2 small lobes, lower lip with 3 spreading lobes, the lobes 0.5–0.7 mm long, light purple, rounded; **stamens** 4, all fertile, pairs fused at 2 levels, 2 stamens arising at top of tube and 2 stamens arising ca. 0.3 mm higher on throat, subsessile, included and not visible; filaments short, white to pale yellow; anthers basifixed, dithecal, 0.3–0.35 mm long, greenish yellow, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, \pm 1.2 mm long; ovary superior, obovoid and shallowly 4-lobed, 0.4 \times 0.3 mm, green, 4-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style arising from tapered top of ovary, pale green, unequally 2-branched, the lower branch lateral, shorter, and not stigmatic, the longer branch reaching the bases of the lower anthers, erect, subspheroid, and stigmatic. **Fruits:** schizocarp (microbasarium), of 4 dry,

1-seeded mericarps (nutlets), nutlets 3-sided oblong, $2-2.2 \times 0.45-0.5$ mm, brown, angled, with fine, pale brown warty growths (muricate) or papillate on inner faces, longitudinally 4(-5)-veined on outer face but with cross veins and appearing netlike above midpoint, attachment scar at base of inner faces white. Early July-late September.

Native. Annual (in range) occurring on the edge of range at a vernal pool in Day Canyon near the Reagan Presidential Library, growing with *Crypsis schoenoides*, *Rumex* spp., and *Eleocharis*. *Verbena bracteata* has the smallest flowers of local verbenas, but shares the same type of nutlets, having conspicuous fine warty growths on the inner faces. It is interesting that this species can be found infected by the parasite *Cuscuta*.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson