

*Zeltnera exaltata* (Griseb.) G. Mans., SPRING LOVING CENTAURY, DESERT CENTAURY.

Annual, slender-taprooted, 1-stemmed at base, with branched terminal inflorescence, erect, in range 8–19(–35) cm tall; shoots with suberect leaves, glabrous. **Stems:** 4-sided and square in  $\times$ -section, to 1.5 mm diameter, narrowly winged at angles descending from leaf margins, light green. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade lanceolate to narrowly ovate, in range 10–25(–30)  $\times$  (1–)3–9 mm, dull, entire and margins loosely inrolled under (revolute), acute to slightly acuminate at tip, pinnately veined with midrib raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** simple or compound cyme, terminal and sometimes axillary, open, several–many-flowered, bracteate; bracts subtending cymes and bractlets subtending flower paired, leaflike, decreasing upward; peduncle erect (suberect if axillary), stemlike, 36–60 mm long; pedicel suberect to ascending, stemlike, at anthesis 12–26 mm long increasing 2 $\times$  in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, in range 9–10 mm across; **calyx** 4(–5)-lobed, 7–7.5(–11) mm long; tube 2–3 mm long; lobes appressed, narrowly triangular, 4–5.5 mm long, 0.7–1 mm wide at base, green, keeled on back, adherent to corolla tube, with narrow, scarious margins, acute at tip, persistent; **corolla** 4(–5)-lobed, trumpetlike (salverform); tube narrowly fusiform (conforming to ovary), in range 5.5–8.5(–10) mm long, colorless but greenish tinged at top, delicate, stretched with ovary expansion; throat 1.5–2 mm long, ca. 0.7 mm wide and green at base, ca. 1.7 mm wide and pinkish or white at orifice; lobes elliptic-ovate or appearing linear because of inrolled margins, 3–4(–7)  $\times$  1.5–2 mm, deep purplish pink or rosy pink to white, rounded to notched or jagged at tip; **stamens** 4(–5), fused to base of corolla throat, alternate with corolla lobes, exserted; filaments  $\pm$  2 mm long, greenish at base and white at tip, glabrous; anthers basifixed, dithecal, 1–1.5  $\times$  0.6 mm prior to dehiscing, yellow with greenish connective, longitudinally dehiscent becoming tightly helical and ca. 0.5 mm long after dehiscing; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, ca. 8 mm long; ovary superior, oblong and somewhat 4-sided, 4.3–5.5  $\times$  1.4–2.5 mm, tapered at tip, 1-chambered and longitudinally grooved over each placenta, the 2 placentae intruding with numerous ovules; style exserted, 2.2 mm long, pale green or whitish except greenish below stigma; stigma slightly below or later at same level as anthers, 2-lobed, the lobes initially appressed to each other then spreading when receptive, fan-shaped, ca. 0.3  $\times$  0.5 mm, fleshy, yellowish green, papillate on inner side. **Fruit:** capsule, septicidal, many-seeded, dehiscent by 2 valves, many-seeded, narrowly fusiform, in range 5–8 mm long, dehiscing most of its length with valves arching  $\pm$  90° at 1/4 from tip. **Seed:** ovoid to ellipsoid,  $\pm$  0.35  $\times$  0.25 mm, dark brown, conspicuously netlike. Late May–early September.

Native. A creekside herb first collected in 2005 at SMMNRA Circle X Ranch (SMM) and soon after also found at SMMNRA Cheeseboro Canyon (SH). This full-sun species has much smaller flowers than the very showy *Zeltnera venusta*. They both share the feature that anthers become tightly helical following release of the pollen.

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