

*Atriplex* L. SALT BUSH

*Atriplex suberecta* I. Verd., SPRAWLING SALT BUSH, PEREGRINE SALT BUSH. Annual (perennial herb), taprooted, many-stemmed at base, highly branched, sprawling and prostrate or decumbent to ascending, 5–65 cm tall, width >> height, large plants to 150 cm across; monoecious; shoots somewhat glaucous with ascending, bluish gray leaves, initially with moderate to dense layer of colorless, balloonlike hairs (vesicular), the hairs collapsing on drying to form white, scurfy coat (farinose). **Stems:** cylindrical without ridges, to 8 mm diameter, light green covered with scattered white, scurfy hairs, aging glabrate and tannish; periderm fracturing and peeling on mostly leafless old stems. **Leaves:** mostly helically alternate, simple, short-petiolate to sessile, without stipules; petiole < 1–4 mm long, scurfy on lower surface; blade ovate or obovate to rhombic or oblong, (8–)12–35(–43) × 6–34 mm, thin, broadly tapered or obtuse to long-tapered at base, coarsely and irregularly toothed or wavelike-serrate (entire) on margins with < 4 teeth per edge, obtuse to acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib sunken on upper surface and principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface becoming glabrescent and glaucous, lower surface sparsely tannish scurfy or farinose. **Inflorescence:** panicle of clusters of flowers (glomes), glome subspheroid with several–many staminate or pistillate flowers on a short terminal and lateral spike, < 7 mm across, glome mostly staminate with several pistillate flowers at base (terminal glome), staminate and pistillate (subterminal glomes), or only pistillate flowers (basal glomes), bracteate; bract subtending staminate glome leaflike or reduced, lanceolate, entire (upper glomes); bracteoles subtending and completely enclosing pistillate flower 2, sessile or subsessile, ovate to ± rhombic, at anthesis 0.7–1.3 × 0.6–1.2 mm, fleshy, green, fused to midpoint, acute at tip with 1 tooth on each free edge, externally densely vesicular but surface ± visible, internally sparsely vesicular above ovary. **Staminate flower:** radial, 1.5–1.8 mm across; **perianth** calyxlike, 5-lobed, fused to midpoint; lobes subequal, ovate, 0.6–0.8 × 0.5–0.8 mm, green with whitish membranous margins becoming pinkish or reddish on margins, slightly cupped, outer surface scurfy-farinose (glabrate); **stamens** 5, opposite perianth lobes, fused in ring at base for ca. 0.25 mm; filaments (0.4–)0.7–0.9 mm long, light yellowish green to whitish, tapered; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.4–0.8 mm long, light yellow to yellowish green becoming orange-tinged, the sacs oblong to ellipsoid, joined by short connective near top, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** minute, sterile. **Pistillate flower:** **perianth** absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1, at anthesis 0.8–1.4 mm long; ovary superior, vertical and compressed-spheroid to transversely ellipsoid or somewhat heart-shaped, 0.3–0.5 × 0.4–0.6 mm, green, 1-chambered with 1 basal ovule; styles 2 (sometimes fused at base), unequal, 0.4–1 mm long, pale green becoming tannish, stigmatic most of length. **Fruit:** utricle, vertical, indehiscent and tightly enclosed by 2 hard bracteoles; utricle membranous and saclike, conforming to shape of seed and loosely adherent to it, whitish transparent, ± wrinkled, with persistent styles; bracteoles in fruit sessile or stalk to 0.7 mm long, fused to midpoint, rhombic to ± 6-sided, 2.2–2.8 × (1.7–)2.4–2.9 mm, broadly tapered at base, with 1–2 teeth on each free edge (above midpoint), acute to broadly acuminate at tip forming a beak, externally scurfy-farinose to glabrescent, without bumps, with several veins (obscurely veined). **Seed:** ± discoid, 0.9–1.15 × 1.1–1.25(–1.4) × 0.5–0.7 mm, glossy brown, with tip of radicle ascending. Late May–Late October.

Naturalized. A weedy annual occasionally observed in disturbed sites near agricultural fields of Camarillo on the western boundary of the range and in a waste area in Liberty Canyon (SMM). *Atriplex suberecta* has leaves with short petioles (< 4 mm). In fruit its bracteoles are rhomboidal and up to four mm long and the widest at the midpoint, with only a few teeth above midpoint.

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