

*Ceanothus* L. CALIFORNIA-LILAC

*Ceanothus leucodermis* Greene, CHAPARRAL WHITETHORN. Large shrub, evergreen, somewhat spinescent, with short, rigid branches having some spine-tipped, short lateral shoots (= stem spines), 200–400 cm tall; shoots with several leaves on short shoots lacking internodes, somewhat puberulent-strigose becoming glabrescent, conspicuously gray-glaucous. **Stems:** cylindric, precociously woody and becoming glabrate, internodes on slender twigs typically < 20 mm long and with projecting, stubby leaf scars, woody stems appearing ± whitish or grayish but pale green beneath surface wax. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, awl-shaped, 1.2–2.2 mm long, greenish but becoming dark reddish brown, acuminate at tip, keeled and puberulent on back, when abscised leaving purple-red scar; petiole slightly flattened on upper side, 2–5.5 mm long, flexible, puberulent; blade ovate or oval to roundish, 12–27(–40) × 6–21 mm, flat, truncate or slightly cordate at base, ± entire, acute to obtuse or rounded at tip, conspicuously 3-veined from base with principal veins not or slightly raised on lower surface, nearly glabrate, upper surface glossy dark green beneath surface wax, lower surface sparsely short-strigose along principal veins. **Inflorescence:** panicle, 20–80 × 12–17(–35) mm, unbranched or with several truncated, lateral branches, many-flowered, with helically alternate, ascending, flowering branchlets, flowering branchlet to 9-flowered, bracteate; peduncle and rachis inconspicuously glandular-puberulent to tomentose, light green; bract subtending flowering branchlet ovate to elliptic and cupped to hoodlike, 2–4 × 1.7–2.4 mm, light green with reddish brown tip, short-tomentose or short-villous, internally soft-strigose, abscising in bud; flowering branchlet to 3.5 mm long, light green; bractlets subtended pedicel 2, like bract but reduced and narrower upward, abscising in bud; pedicel slender, 3.5–8 mm long, (whitish) pale to light violet, flexible, glabrous. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 4–4.5 mm across; protandrous; hypanthium subtending fleshy disc and ovary, colored like pedicel but darker or greenish; **sepals** 5, ovate-deltate, 1.5–2 mm long, strongly incurved, ridged on upper surface, pale to light violet (darker in bud); **petals** 5, initially ascending later spreading, narrowly clawed and conspicuously hooded, ± 2 mm long, pale to light violet (same color as sepals), upper surface lacking ridge, minutely hairy on margins above midpoint; **stamens** 5, free, opposite petals; filaments curved-ascending or arching inward, ± 1.5 mm long, light violet, erect after released by petals; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.6–0.8 mm long prior to dehiscing, yellow, anther sacs divergent at base, longitudinally dehiscent in bud while enclosed in petal hood; **nectary disc** ringlike, 1–1.3 mm diameter deep, ± violet becoming greenish, weakly scalloped or wavy with a shallow sinus between filaments and a notch opposite filament, ± 0.25 mm thick; **pistil** 1, 1–1.7 mm long; ovary superior, dome-shaped without horns, green, 3-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style 0.6–1 mm long, 3-branched at or above midpoint while appressed, at anthesis spreading and increasing to 1.6 mm long after anthers discharge pollen, deep violet aging light violet; stigmas colored like style, minutely papillate. **Fruit:** capsule, schizocarpic with 3 1-seeded units, spheroid, 4.6–5.5 mm diameter, slightly depressed at top, 3-lobed, not crested or with horns, separating into 3 parts from persistent disc 4 mm across, the outer layer brownish, glabrous, the inner layer hard, straw-colored, smooth. **Seed:** ± round and slightly compressed, 3 × 2.5–3 mm, satiny dark brown (slightly 2-toned), somewhat 3-sided, smooth. Late March–early May.

Native. A tall chaparral shrub occasionally observed growing along the high ridges of SMM, typically on sandstone, e. g., in Cold Creek Canyon and at SMMNRA Circle X Ranch. Nobody has mapped the local occurrence of *Ceanothus leucodermis*, which is similar from a distance to *C. spinosus*, and where the two species are sympatric, hybridization with *C. leucodermis* is assumed. Leaf blades of *C. leucodermis* are conspicuously three-veined at the base, and one must look very closely to see sparse hairs on the surfaces. This species tends to be more thorny in comparison with *C. oliganthus* and more conspicuously gray-glaucous on the twigs and lower leaves, while its flowers are paler, although for *C. oliganthus* there is considerable color range between even adjacent individuals.

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