

Crassula L. STONECROP

Crassula connata (Ruiz Lopez & Pavón) A. Berger, PYGMY-WEED. Annual, diminutive, taprooted, several-stemmed at base, often mat-forming, opposite-branched throughout, decumbent to erect, typically 2–6(–10) cm tall; shoots with tiny, fleshy leaves, glabrous. **Stems:** flattish on 2 sides, to 1 mm diameter, fleshy, colorless or light green becoming rose-pink. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple with each pair fused across node (perfoliate), sessile, without stipules; blade ovate to oblong, 1–2.5 × 1–1.7 mm, fleshy, dull green becoming reddish, typically flat on upper surface and convex below, membranous along fused portion of margins, entire with 1–4+ sunken red glands on the lower surface on each margin, obtuse at tip, venation obscure. **Inflorescence:** compound of 1–many dichasial cymes (thyrsoid), leafy, terminal and axillary, cyme 1–several-flowered, flowers erect and sessile or with short pedicels, lacking bracts, glabrous; pedicel ascending, thin, at anthesis to 0.5 mm long increasing to < 3 mm long in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 1–1.3 mm across; **sepals** 4(–5), erect, triangular to triangular-ovate, 0.8–1.4 × 0.4–0.7 mm, light green often with several rose-colored spots, fleshy, acute to slightly acuminate with colorless point at tip; **petals** 4(–5), lanceolate, 0.7–1.2 × 0.2–0.3 mm, nonfleshy, colorless to whitish, acuminate at tip; **stamens** 4(–5), free, opposite sepals, with scales; filaments 0.25–0.55 mm long, colorless; anther basifixed, dithecal, < 0.15 mm long, light yellow to orangey yellow or deep rose, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish; scales 4(3–5), opposite petals, appressed to base of pistil, slightly club-shaped, < 0.3 mm long, as wide as filament, blunt and sometimes reddish at tip; **pistils** 4(–5), free, 0.4–1 mm long; ovary superior, compressed side-to-side, deep rose to reddish or orange-red on stigma, 1-chambered with (1–)2 ovules; styles < 0.1 mm long; stigmas minute. **Fruits:** follicles, 4, typically 2-seeded, dehiscent lengthwise along inner walls, ± 0.4 × 0.25 mm, pinkish. **Seed:** ellipsoid, ± 0.4 × 0.25 mm, orangey to reddish brown, faintly and irregularly longitudinally ridged. Mid-December–early May.

Native. A tiny spring annual sometimes abundant throughout the range during wet months of rainy years and disappearing quickly as the soil dries. In older treatments, *Crassula connata* was called *Tillaea erecta*. Every part of the plant is so small that a hand lens or higher magnification is required to study pygmy-weed. Like other Crassulaceae, the leaves and stems store water; the parts are best termed fleshy because they are not adapted to bouts of drying. Our populations of *Crassula connata* seem to fit best variety *erectoides*, if that taxon is recognized. Near our range has been reported the Australian *C. colligata* subsp. *lamprosperma*, which should be searched for.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson