

Cryptantha G. Don POPCORNFLOWER

Cryptantha microstachys (A. Gray) Greene, TEJON CRYPTANTHA. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, with ascending branches mostly above midplant, erect, 8–60 cm tall; shoots rough-hairy and hispid, the stiff hairs to 2.5 mm long, with blisterlike bases (pustulate) aging whitish. **Stems:** cylindric, to 4 mm diameter, sometimes with 2 ridges descending from each leaf, tough but brittle, glossy green, hispid but on some internodes also sparsely strigose. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade linear to linear-oblongate or when large oblong-lanceolate, 4–105 × 1.5–14 mm, entire, acute with blunt, hard point at tip, midrib conspicuously sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, hispid with erect to spreading pustulate hairs. **Inflorescence:** spikelike cyme, terminal on each branch, unbranched or with several forks, each cyme in fruit to 60 mm long, many-flowered, 1–sided, coiled at tip opening ± straight, with 2-rows of flowers, flowers subsessile, crowded in coil becoming spaced in fruit, hispid with colorless bristles to 2 mm long, lacking bracts; peduncle initially short often becoming increasing and slender in fruit, when 2 or 3 branches with flower at basal fork. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 2–2.4 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, fused only at base, at anthesis ± 1 mm long increasing to 2 mm in fruit, the longest bristles (below midpoint) sometimes aging yellowish; lobes equal, narrowly oblong, ± 0.9 mm long, aging linear, midvein not conspicuous, bristles with enlarged bases, strigose on margins, inner surface short-strigose near midpoint; **corolla** 5-lobed, short trumpet-shaped (short-salverform), 1.3–2 mm long, in bud with 5 conspicuous dimples on throat hidden by calyx lobes; tube cask-shaped, ± 0.6 mm long, green to olive green to brownish at base, bright yellow at level of anthers and throat white approaching lobes, throat with 5 dimples internally golden or vivid greenish yellow and papillate-glandular; lobes slightly overlapping, roundish, 0.4–0.5 × 0.4–0.6 mm, bright white; **stamens** 5, fused to midpoint of corolla tube alternate with corolla lobes, included; filaments 0.1–0.15 mm long, greenish yellow; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, oblong, 0.2–0.3 × 0.15–0.2 mm, bright yellow aging red, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, ca. 0.9 mm long, included; ovary superior, 4-lobed, at anthesis 0.5 mm long, green, smooth; style attached to ovary base in center of lobes, cylindric, not increasing in fruit, colorless; stigma capitate, wider than style, pale yellowish green. **Fruits:** nutlets, 1–2, narrowly ovoid, 1.5–2 × 0.65 mm, glossy dark brown, smooth, rounded on outer sides and back, groove closed except at short-forked end, edges sharp around fork. Late March–late June.

Native. Annual occurring throughout the range in open habitat, but occasionally also in old chaparral, where individuals may be robust and larger than typically reported for this species. *Cryptantha microstachys* is hispid but typically not strigose on leaves and axes. It produces one or two shiny, smooth nutlets per flower; as in *C. clevelandii*, but the calyx in fruit never exceeds two millimeters in length, and the style is persistent and shorter so that the mature nutlet extends well above the stigma. *Cryptantha microstachys* also has a much narrower corolla.

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