

Cuscuta L. DODDER

Cuscuta californica Hooker & Arnott var. *papillosa* Yunck., COMMON DODDER. Annual parasitic vine, twining, flexible-stemmed, attached to host stem by haustoria; shoots essentially leafless, orange (yellowish; lacking chlorophyll), glabrous. **Stems:** threadlike, 0.4–0.7 mm diameter, orange (yellowish), smooth but becoming knobby where haustoria initiate. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade appressed, awl-shaped, to 1.5 mm long, acute to acuminate at tip, short-lived and early abscised. **Inflorescence:** headlike axillary cluster of 1–5 condensed cymes per node, each cyme 1–3-flowered, bracteate, glabrous; bract subtending cyme scalelike, to 1.3 mm long; pedicel 0–1 mm long; bracteoles minute. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, bisexual, ca. 6.5 mm across (spreading petals); receptacle 1–2 mm long; **calyx** 5-lobed, ca. 2.5 mm long, 1–1.3 mm diameter, surface minutely bladderlike (vesicular) to midpoint; tube ca. 0.5 mm long; lobes overlapping, heart-shaped to triangular, 1–2 × 1–5 mm, tip of 0.3 spreading or reflexed, ± transparent, acuminate at tip; **corolla** 5-lobed, bell-shaped, white; tube, in range 2–2.5 × 1.6–2.8 mm; lobes initially erect and attached then reflexed and free, triangular to lanceolate, 2.7–3.8 × 1–1.5 mm, acute to acuminate at tip, lacking appendages; **stamens** 5, alternate with corolla lobes, fused to corolla tube; filaments 0.7–2 mm long above corolla sinuses, white but tips aging purplish brown; anthers exerted, basifixed, dithecal, linear to linear-oblong, 0.7–1.5 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **nectary disc** beneath ovary, ringlike, brownish; **pistil** 1, ca. 4–5 mm long; ovary superior, conic but with circular to narrowly elliptic depression at top, greenish on sides and white at top, 2-chambered, each chamber with 2 green ovules; styles 2, arising from within depression, of 2 lengths, in range 2.3–3.5 mm long within flower, white, 1 style to 0.7 mm shorter than other style; stigmas positioned to base or midpoint of anthers, capitate, yellow. **Fruit:** berrylike capsule, in range 2–4-seeded, indehiscent or rupturing irregularly, subtended by persistent calyx and enveloped by withered corolla. **Seed:** ovoid, 1.2 × 0.9 × 0.5 mm, light brown. Mid-March–early December.

Native. Parasitic herbaceous vine occurring throughout the range, coastal and inland, attached to a wide variety host plants, e.g., *Ambrosia chamissonis*, *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, *Croton californicus*, *Corethrogyne filaginifolia*, and species of *Salvia*, but also found occasionally on a variety of herbs, including annuals. *Cuscuta californica* var. *papillosa* is difficult to distinguish from other varieties, but all our materials appear to be papillate on the calyx, and therefore best fit var. *papillosa*. Epidermal cells of calyx lobes and sometimes of the corolla tube are elongated, slightly bulging, glistening, and clear or slightly golden transparent, but when dry the cells collapse and become concave.

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