

Cuscuta L. DODDER

Cuscuta subinclusa Durand & Hilg., CANYON DODDER. Perennial parasitic vine, twining, flexible-stemmed, attached to host stems with haustoria; shoots essentially leafless, orangish (lacking chlorophyll) with whitish lines = vascular tissues, glabrous. **Stems:** threadlike and cylindric, 0.5–1.7 mm diameter, initially pale green soon turning light orange, fleshy, flexible, ± straight when searching for support, becoming knobby where haustoria initiate. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade appressed, oblong to lanceolate, 1–3 × 0.5–1 mm, cupped to hooded, acuminate to acute or rounded at tip, early-abscised. **Inflorescence:** headlike cyme, axillary, = dense cluster of 1–5+ condensed cymes each 1–several-flowered, flowers subsessile, glabrous, with knobby bumps on stems close to inflorescence; bractlet subtending pedicel scalelike and ovate, 1.5–2.5 mm long, whitish translucent; pedicel 0–1 mm long; bracteoles minute. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 4 mm across, in bud 4–6.3(–7) mm long; **calyx** (4–)5-lobed, funnel-shaped, 1.8–3.3 × 1.6–2.1 mm, whitish translucent except very pale green at base, persistent; tube to midpoint, 0.6–1.2 mm long; lobes erect, overlapping, ovate to lanceolate, 1.5–2.1(–2.5) × 0.8–1.6 mm, acute to acuminate at tip, 1 lobe sometimes deeply 2-lobed, outer surface ± papillate; **corolla** (4–)5-lobed, ± tubular to long bell-shaped (salverform), white, with 5 appendages at tube base fused at base with adjacent appendaged by ∩-shaped tissue; tube cylindric, 3.1–4.5(–5.5) × (0.8–)1.2–1.8 mm; appendages spatulate with fringed margins, 1.2–1.8 × 0.3–0.5 mm, whitish, rounded at tip; lobes ascending to widely spreading, triangular to broadly lanceolate, (1–)1.2–1.7 × 0.9–1.9 mm, surfaces with raised watery cells; **stamens** (4–)5, fused to and arising at end of tube alternate with corolla lobes; filaments 0–0.2 mm long, whitish; anthers slightly exerted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.6–0.8 × 0.3–0.4 mm, bright greenish yellow, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen bright yellow; **nectary disc** beneath ovary, ringlike, green to brown; **pistil** 1, to 3 mm long; ovary superior, ovoid to inversely pear-shaped, 1–1.5 × 0.9–1.2 mm, green next to nectary, light green at midpoint, whitish at tip, with an elliptically depressed area or 2 thick lips forming a V-shaped sinus at tip, 2-chambered, each chamber with (1–)2 green ovules; styles 2, arising within ovary sinus, unequal, 1.5–2 × 0.2 mm and 1.2–1.6 × 0.15 mm, whitish; stigmas capitate, 0.25 mm wide (long style) and 0.2 mm wide (short style), green. **Fruit:** capsule, indehiscent or weakly dehiscent rupturing irregularly, typically 1-seeded, broadly ovoid, 1.5–3 mm long, with 5 short lobes at tip. **Seed:** spheroid to broadly ovoid, 1.3–1.7 × 1.2–1.5 mm, dull light brown. Late February–early October.

Native. A twining, orange stem parasite, infecting the fleshy host plant *Malosma laurina* (laurel sumac) but parasitic also occasionally on neighboring herbs and woody plants such as *Ceanothus spinosus*, *Mimulus aurantiacus*, *Encelia californica*, and *Solanum xanti*. During a “good” year, *Cuscuta subinclusa* can become locally abundant on laurel sumac, but in other years individuals of the parasite are rarely observed. Although dodders are commonly classified as annuals, probably this one is a perennial herb that resides in the bark and erupts when the plants are in good health. This has the longest and most showy flowers of the local dodder species. Our materials have shorter anthers than reported elsewhere.

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