

Frankenia L. FRANKENIA

Frankenia salina (Molina) I. M. Johnst., ALKALI HEATH. Subshrub, ± evergreen, clonal, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, forming loose mats many meters across, fibrous-rooted at buried nodes, decumbent to ascending or erect, 10–30(–90) cm tall; shoots appearing tufted near branch tips with unexpanded axillary shoots, excreting salt crystals, typically finely short-hirsute (hirtellous) with erect and spreading hairs aging glabrate. **Stems:** cylindrical, < 3 mm diameter, becoming conspicuously swollen above node, green to grayish green when young or magenta on exposed side, older stems dark brown or gray with periderm, nodes ± regularly spaced, internodes 15–20 mm long on leafy stems, to 35 mm long on older, leafless stems. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, short-petiolate with pair fused across node forming a membranous sheath, without stipules; petiole typically < 1 mm long, expanded basally into membranous base, ciliate on margins (hairs > 1 mm long) and resembling reduced stipules; blade obovate to elliptic or oblong, 5–14 × 1.5–5 mm, ± inrolled to lower side and often arched, entire, rounded with short point at tip, pinnately veined with midrib apparent on lower surface and obscure on upper surface, hirtellous. **Inflorescence:** leafy dichasial cyme, terminal and axillary, 1–several-flowered, flowers sessile, bracteate, densely hirtellous; peduncle (1–)5–7 mm long; bracts 2 at node subtending unequal pair of lateral branches, leaflike, in range subequal in pair, 7–8(–10.5) mm long, shorter bract subtending shorter branch, fused across node; bractlets subtending flower 2, conspicuously unequal, 1 bractlet leaflike and < bract, the shorter bractlet either flat, whitish, and deltate, 0.5 mm long or somewhat leaflike, green, and oblanceolate, 1–3 mm long; pedicels absent. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 4.5–8 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, in range 6–7.5 × 1–1.3 mm, green often with rose grooves and aging purplish before drying, 5-angled and accordionlike, densely short-hirsute; teeth ascending, narrowly acute to acuminate, 0.5–1 mm long, minutely toothed on margins; **petals** 5, clawed, 9–11 mm long, rose or purplish pink to reddish purple (pink or white); claw conspicuously winged, 4–5 mm long, whitish to pale pink, wings inward-facing, with midline ridge ending in ligulelike terminal extension; limb spreading to recurved, in range oblong to oblanceolate or obovate, 2.5–6.5 × 1.5–2.7 mm, minutely jagged at tip; **stamens** (4–)6(–7) in 2 subequal whorls, free, exerted 2–4.5 mm; filaments in range 7–11 mm long, colored like petals or yellowish green at swollen, nectar-producing base, white and flat in middle, purplish pink above midpoint; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 1–1.3 mm long, reddish purple, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen ± colorless but white in mass; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, narrowly ovoid, 2 mm long, green, glabrous, 1-chambered with many ovules attached on outer wall at base; style exerted, in range 4–7 mm long, colored like petals or whitish at base, 3-branched, the branches spreading below level of anthers, slender, 1/2–1/3 style length, purplish pink to reddish purple; stigmas oblique, discoid, ± transparent or whitish. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, typically 5–13(–20)-seeded, lanceoloid to ellipsoid, 3.5–4(–5) mm long, purplish before drying dull brown, enclosed in firm, persistent calyx; seeds attached on long funiculi to fruit base. **Seed:** compressed-fusiform, 0.9–1.2 × 0.6–0.7 mm, golden brown, with a thin raphe extending as a pale line from one end of seed to the other, glabrous; mucilaginous when wetted. Late May–early October.

Native. A halophytic, essentially evergreen perennial that can be a codominant in patches of coastal salt marsh, where it is rooted in wet mud. *Frankenia salina* has ericoid leaves (heathlike with inrolled margins) that are opposite decussate, but the plant appears to have whorled leaves because at each node there may be leaves of unexpanded axillary shoots. Subtending each sessile flower is a pair of dissimilar bractlets, one of which is much smaller and sometimes reduced to a whitish scale.

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