

*Hydrocotyle* L. MARSH PENNYWORT

*Hydrocotyle verticillata* Thunb., WHORLED MARSH PENNYWORT. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted at nodes, lacking aboveground stems, with ascending leaves and flowering shoots, in range to 20 cm tall; shoots glabrous, lacking any distinctive odor; rhizomes cylindric, 1.2–1.5 mm diameter, white, internodes often 20–60 mm long, with tuberlike swelling at node; adventitious roots at nodes. **Leaves:** alternate, simple and umbrellalike (peltate), long-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to stem, broadly triangular, < 2 mm long, scarious and brownish or with purplish spots; petiole cylindric, 35–200+ mm long, white belowground and green aboveground; blade round to broadly kidney-shaped, 21–35 × 24–40 mm, slightly wider than long, with 8–11(–13) shallow, subequal lobes, cordate at base, crenate on lobe margins, palmately veined to each lobe, glossy. **Inflorescence:** interrupted “spike” of whorled flowers at nodes (verticils), axillary, with axis unbranched to forked 1 or 2 times (3–4-forked), each verticil 5–7-flowered (appearing greater at tips because rachis not elongated), bracteate, glabrous; peduncle 25–50(–200) mm long, typically < petiole; rachis internodes between lower verticils 10–15 mm long; bractlet subtending pedicel heart-shaped to lanceolate, membranous on margin; pedicel at anthesis < 0.5 mm long increasing slightly in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ± 1.5 mm across; **sepals** absent; **petals** 5, ascending to spreading at anthesis, triangular-ovate, 0.5–0.8 × 0.4–0.5 mm, white to greenish white, often persistent and reflexed on fruit; **stamens** 5, free, alternate with petals; filaments ± 0.5 mm long, greenish white, arched inward; anthers versatile, dithecal, ca. 0.3 mm long and wide, yellowish green aging orangey yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior with ± fleshy, green cushionlike platform (stylopodium, stylar tissue) on top, roundish and compressed ⊥ septum, ca. 0.7 mm wide, 2-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles 2, ± 0.5 mm long, pale green; stigmas terminal, minute, green aging reddish. **Fruit:** schizocarp, of 2 dry 1-seeded halves (mericarps), mericarps hemispheric compressed side-to-side, 1.8–2 × 1.1–1.5 mm, ca. 0.7 mm thick on margin with fruit wall unevenly thickened around seed, weakly ribbed, glabrous; carpophore absent. **Seed:** D-shaped and compressed side-to-side, ca. 1.2 mm long, firmly attached to fruit wall. Early August–late September.

Native. Aquatic perennial herb occurring on a tributary to Century Lake at Malibu Creek State Park (SMM), where it was undoubtedly brought in by waterfowl. *Hydrocotyle verticillata* has distinctive round-peltate leaves, and the axillary inflorescence is a “spike,” often with a forked axis having whorled, subsessile, nonshowy flowers at each node.  
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