

Mentha L. MINT

Mentha pulegium L., PENNYROYAL. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, 1–several-stemmed at base, decumbent to ascending, to 60 cm tall; shoots with cauline leaves and tufted with immature leaves on short axillary shoots, short-villous and dotted with dome-shaped and short-stalked glandular hairs, strongly aromatic when touched, the domed glandular heads sunken and colorless. **Stems:** 4-angled aging cylindric, to 2 mm diameter, short-villous, not glandular. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, petiolate with pair connected by 2 low ledges across node, without stipules; petiole channeled, < 5 mm long; blade narrowly ovate to broadly elliptic, 8–25 × 3.5–9 mm, tapered to obtuse at base, entire to remotely toothed on margins, obtuse to rounded at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins slightly raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** condensed cymes, axillary along a terminal, interrupted axis, at each node with a headlike pair of cymes (verticil), flowering axis to 400 mm long with several–16 verticils, each verticil ca. 12 mm across, each cyme ± umbel-like and many-flowered, bracteate, short-pubescent; axis with internodes 15–25 mm long and somewhat 4-sided; bract subtending each cyme (2 per node) leaflike with short petiole, spreading to deflexed, narrowly obovate to broadly elliptic, < 20 mm long decreasing upward, entire, acute at tip, with glandular hairs; peduncle of cyme to ± 1.5 mm long, not glandular; bracts of cyme typically 4 (whorl-like) with 2 opposite at top of peduncle subtending pedicels, reflexed, < bract at node and < calyx, sometimes with 1 or 2 other diminutive bractlets, bracts and bractlets absent in center of cyme; pedicel 1–2 mm long, green aging brown, short-puberulent with deflexed hairs, persistent also after flowers abscise. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 2.5–3 mm across, pubescent; **calyx** 5-lobed, in range 2.5–3 mm long, strongly 10-veined, short-pilose; tube narrowly bell-shaped, green but paler and having glandular hairs with spheric heads between veins, 3–5 glandular heads per row, internally at mouth with ascending stiff hairs; lobes subequal, acuminate, ± 1 mm long, green with lavender at tip; **corolla** 2-lipped, 4-lobed, in range ± 5 mm long; tube narrowly cylindric, 1.5–2 mm long, white; throat bell-shaped, 1.5–2 mm long, white; lips ± equal, widely spread 1.5 mm long, lavender, crooked hairy on outer surfaces; upper lip unlobed, ascending, broadly lanceolate-oblong and cupped; lower lip deeply 3-lobed, ovate and rounded; **stamens** 4, fused to upper throat, ± equal, exerted; filaments 2 mm long, pale lavender; anthers ± versatile, dithecal, ± 0.35 mm long, lavender and white; pollen light lavender; **nectary** bulbous beneath ovary, 0.4 mm long, green; **pistil** 1, ca. 4 mm long; ovary superior, strongly 4-lobed, lobes ovoid, 0.2 mm long, green, each chamber with 1 ovule; style attached to ovary base in center of lobes, exerted ca 1.5 mm beyond corolla, light lavender, unequally forked near tip, forks short. **Fruits:** nutlets, typically 1–3(–4), subspheroid, ± 0.5 mm long, brown. Early July–late September.

Naturalized. Perennial herb of old-style gardens occurring in isolated localities on wet banks, e.g., the northern tip Lake Sherwood near to Potrero Road. *Mentha pulegium*, pennyroyal, has small, mostly entire leaves with rounded tips, and it is distinctive in having slender flowering shoots with long internodes between the verticils, while the two leaflike bracts subtending the flowering node and especially the four smaller bracts tend to be deflexed.

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