

Plectritis (Lindl.) DC.

Plectritis ciliosa (Greene) Jepson subsp. *insignis* (Suksd.) D. Morey, LONG-SPURRED PLECTRITIS. Annual, taprooted, 1-stemmed at base, unbranched or with several lateral shoots mostly unbranched, erect, 5–35 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, glabrous. **Stems:** in \times -section square and sharply 4-ridged, < 1 mm diameter, a ridge descending from each leaf, the ridges colorless to pink, internodes mostly 20–85 mm long but lowest ones as short as 1 mm long. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, petiolate (lower pair of leaves) and sessile (upper leaves) with pair fused across node forming a sheath, without stipules; petiole 2–5 mm long; blade narrowly spatulate to roundish, 2.5–5 \times 1.5–5 mm (lower leaves) to oblong to lanceolate, 10–25 mm \times 2.5–7 mm (upper leaves), sheath around stem 0.2–1 mm long, entire, tapered at base and rounded at tip (lower leaves) to rounded at base and acute at tip (upper leaves), entire, 5–9-veined at base with midrib raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** compound of condensed cymes (thyrses), terminal, 75–190 mm long, cymes paired at 2 or 3 nodes, each 11–23-flowered, at the lowest node dichasial, at other nodes monochasial, flowers sessile, bracteate, glabrous, with scattered glandular hairs; peduncle 40–75 mm long, 2-ridged, the ridges colorless and descending from bract midribs; bract subtending thyrses peduncle linear, 2.5–4.5 mm long, red-tipped; peduncle of cyme 1–10 mm long; bract \pm subtending each branchlet, linear to awl-shaped, 2–3 mm long, red-tipped; bractlets subtending flower 3, fused at base becoming \perp -shaped with upcurved lobes, red-tipped. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 0.6–1.5 mm across; **calyx** absent; **corolla** 2-lipped and 5-lobed, spurred, 1.9–2.5 mm long, pink to reddish purple with 2 crimson spots on lower lip; tube + throat compressed funnel-shaped; lips 0.5–0.7 mm long, upper lip hooded and shallowly 2-lobed, lower lip deeply 3-lobed; spur slender, 0.6–1 mm long, pale green to whitish and rounded at tip, nectar-producing; **stamens** 3, fused to upper corolla throat; filaments \pm 0.4 mm long; anthers slightly exerted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.2 mm long, red-purple, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, ovoid, green, winged on front and back sides, deeply concave on 1 lateral face, convex on the other face from incurved wings, pubescent, 1-chambered with 1 pendulous ovule; style \pm straight, whitish translucent; stigma slightly 2-lobed, touching anthers. **Fruit:** achene, broadly ovate to circular in outline, in range 1.9–2.3 \times 1.1–1.3 \times 1.5–1.9 mm, 2-winged, short-beaked at tip, strongly convex, ridged, and pubescent on 1 face, deeply concave on other face, the ridge lanceolate (conforming to seed shape), longitudinally 3-veined in center, densely pubescent but glabrous or sparsely pubescent between veins, the wings pubescent on convex faces, arching to concave side, then acutely incurved and forming thickened liplike margins around concavity, the margins touching but distinct at base and tip. **Seed:** difficult to separate from fruit wall, lanceoloid, 1.8–2.2 mm long. Late March–early May.

Native. Annual seen during spring in meadows with other annual species, e.g., at Malibu Creek State Park, near Agoura Hills, or in Latigo Canyon (SMM). *Plectritis ciliosa* is a slender plant, often unbranched with widely spaced pairs of inconspicuous leaves, which fuse to form a short sheath at each node. The inflorescence, called a thyrses, consists of paired cymes with curious pink flowers, hard to diagnose because of evolutionary reduction, including lacking a calyx and having an inferior ovary, only three stamens, and

a bizarre ovary. Moreover, the flowers are densely clustered with additional bractlets. This is one of the few flowers in the flora having a nectar-producing spur, which also appears in *Centranthus*, the other genus in Valerianaceae.

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