

Stephanomeria Nutt. WIRELETTUCE

Stephanomeria cichoriacea A. Gray, CHICORY-LEAVED WIRELETTUCE, SILVER ROCKLETTUCE. Perennial herb, with large root crown, rosetted, several–many-stemmed at base, forming lateral flowering branches from axils of upper cauline leaves, spreading to ascending, (40–)50–120 cm tall; shoots during flowering with well-developed cauline leaves but withered basal leaves, appearing silvery or gray and highly reflective, white-tomentose to \pm woolly becoming glabrate; latex milky, copious, drying sticky. **Stems:** ridged (apparent through hairs), to 13 mm diameter, greenish beneath tomentum (photosynthetic); internodes solid. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile and blade base often partially fused to stem, without stipules; blade oblong, 100–200 \times 27–40 mm (rosette leaves) and oblanceolate to narrowly lanceolate, 15–180 \times 3–30 mm (cauline leaves), gradually reduced upward and grading to bracts, dentate with several widely spaced teeth on margins (entire), long-acuminate at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins raised on lower surface, woolly to glabrescent, glossy beneath hairs. **Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal, long, narrow, leafy, paniclelike arrays, having short, cymelike lateral branches, each lateral branch having 1–several heads, head ligulate, 22–27 mm across, 10–21-flowered, bracteate; principal axes stemlike, green (photosynthetic), tomentose; bract subtending branchlet leaflike, narrowly lanceolate, < 70 mm long, reduced upward, clasping or lobed at base; bract subtending peduncle and bracts along peduncle deltate to ovate, 1–2 mm long, tomentose; peduncle 0–7 mm long, grooved, tomentose, glandular approaching head, lacking bracts (calyculus) subtending head; **involucre** cylindrical in bud, at anthesis flaring, 12–15 mm long, phyllaries in range 25–33, unequal, outer phyllaries in several series, grading from deltate or ovate and short (1.5 mm long) in the outermost series increasing inward to lanceolate and longer (to 7 mm long), green or purplish on exposed tissue and puberulent or sometimes glandular, papillate on margins, often with a tannish crust; inner phyllaries in \pm 1 series, lanceolate to oblong-linear, 10–12(–15) \times 1.5–2 mm, narrowly membranous on margins (purplish at tip), glabrescent on outer surface, tomentose-ciliate at rounded tip; receptacle without bractlets (paleae), pitted, the sockets \pm circular but in fruit the central pits becoming 5–6-sided, 0.5–0.7 mm wide, and separated by narrow, \pm fleshy tissue forming a crownlike ring around central ovaries, the crown to ca. 0.3 mm long, short-toothed and \pm ciliate. **Ligulate flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 3–3.5 mm across, withering during afternoon; **calyx (pappus)** typically of 25–31 capillary bristles, unequal, 4–7.5 mm long, with fine hairs (plumose) base to tip, faintly purplish pigmented along most of axis but white at base; **corolla** 5-toothed; tube-throat cylindrical, 6.2–6.5 mm long, whitish becoming pinkish at throat, finely puberulent above midpoint; limb 10–15 \times 3.5–3.8 mm, light lavender to red-purple or purplish with 4 darker veins, papillate on teeth; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla near top of tube at same level as base of notch; filaments 1–1.5 mm long, purplish red; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, exerted entirely from tube, basifixed, dithecal, 5.5–6.2 mm long, whitish, with appendages at base, truncate or rounded at tip, the transparent appendages ca. 0.5 mm long, base extending < 1 mm below point of filament attachment, undivided, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen creamy white; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, 5-angled, 1.3 mm long, yellowish green, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style exerted 3–4 mm above anthers, 14–15 mm long, whitish and papillate-hairy at base, purplish red with upward-

pointed hairs on exerted portion, 2-branched, nectary = greenish swelling slightly cupping base of style, the branches recurved, \pm 1 mm long, pinkish transparent and papillate on inner face, purplish red and with upward-pointed hairs on outer face. **Fruits:** cypselae, faintly 5–6-angled, 5–6 mm long, tan or grayish tan, with smooth faces, generally grooved; pappus in range of 25–31 bristles, bristles plumose base to tip, 3.5–7.5 mm long, tan to pale brown, persistent. Late July–early October.

Native. Perennial herb living in range mostly on volcanic slopes, e.g., of roadcuts and along trails but also newly exposed slopes lacking chaparral shrubs. *Stephanomeria cichoracea* is the only local perennial species of this genus. It is also the only North American wirelettuce species that does not possess a calyculus (special bracts subtending each head), but it is also the showiest of the local species typically having thirteen or more ligulate flowers per head.

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