

Stylocline Nutt. NESTSTRAW

Stylocline gnaphaloides Nutt., MOUNTAIN NESTSTRAW, EVERLASTING NESTSTRAW. Annual, taprooted, 1–several-stemmed at base, commonly with ascending upper branches, erect (if 1-stemmed) to ascending or decumbent, 1.2–11 mm tall; shoots leafy throughout, white-woolly. **Stems:** cylindric, 0.3–0.8 mm diameter, internodes 0.5–12 mm long. **Leaves:** helically alternate (opposite at the lowest 1 or 2 nodes above cotyledons), sessile, without stipules; blade narrowly oblong to oblanceolate, 2–11(–14) × 0.4–1.6 mm, the shortest at base of stem, entire, acute to obtuse with minute point at tip, obscurely veined, woolly on both surfaces. **Inflorescence:** heads, sometimes in spikelike or racemelike arrays along shoot but more commonly in terminal, condensed clusters of 3–6+ heads, head discoid, broadly ovoid to depressed-spheroid, 1.5–5.5 × 2.5–5.5 mm, of 12–17 pistillate flowers and (2–)3–4(–5) central staminate flowers, sessile or with short peduncle, bracteate, white-woolly; peduncle to 3 mm long; bracts subtending head leaflike (capitular leaves), spatulate to elliptic or oblong, in range 3.2–8 × 0.8–2, woolly; **involucre** of 4–5 phyllaries, phyllaries unequal with the lower 1–2 narrower and sometimes < upper 3 phyllaries, ovate to widely ovate, 2–3.4 × 1.8–2.6 mm, flattish, membranous except having a green central area, the green area triangular or lanceolate from base upward but not reaching tip, 1.3–2.6 × 0.4–0.5 mm, woolly on outer surface, membranous and glabrous on margin and tip; receptacle cylindric, 1.1–2 × 0.2 mm, with bractlets (paleae), palea subtending pistillate flower folded lengthwise to form a semi-ovoid chamber to enclose flower and ± closed on inner side, in range 1.5–3.6 mm long, densely woolly on outer surface, with membranous margins widely spreading and forming a broadly ovate inner surface, 1.4–2.8 mm from margin to margin, palea subtending staminate flower flat or folded lengthwise but open on inner side, ovate, 1.1–1.7 × 0.3–1 mm, outer surface densely woolly on green portion and glabrous on membranous tip and margin, inner surface glabrous. **Pistillate flower:** ± radial; **calyx (pappus)** absent; **corolla** minutely 3–5-lobed, tubular, 1–1.5 × < 0.1 mm, mostly pale yellow or whitish; lobes acuminate; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1, 2.2–3 mm long; ovary inferior, oblanceoloid and sometimes curved, < 1 mm long; style exserted, 0.8–1 mm long, 2-branched, the branches stigmatic, ca. 0.15 mm long, purplish red. **Staminate flower:** radial, arising from top of receptacle; **calyx (pappus)** of 0–6 erect, minutely barbed hairs; **corolla** 4–5-lobed; tube + throat cylindric, 0.9–1.25 × 0.2–0.35 mm; lobes ovate, 0.2–0.25 mm long, orangish; **stamens** 4–5, filaments fused to corolla 0.2–0.4 mm above base; filaments short; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, basifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.5 mm long, light yellow, tailed, with sterile appendage at tip 0.1 mm long, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** sterile; ovary inferior, diminutive and spheric, ca. 0.05 mm; style included, 0.8–0.95 mm long, 2-branched, the branches appressed, < 0.2 mm long. **Fruits:** cypselae, lacking pappus; oblanceoloid and slightly curved, 0.9–1.2 × 0.2–0.4 mm, yellowish brown to brown, smooth, sometimes slightly compressed; dispersed in head appearing like a tiny white-woolly ball. Mid-January–early May.

Native. Tiny annual occurring occasionally on openings in coastal sage scrub and chaparral throughout the range. *Stylocline gnaphaloides* has very small parts that can only be studied with adequate magnification. This species is generally recognizable because

when in fruit the head abscises and appears like a tiny white-woolly ball, which is not a characteristic of the other related species with densely woolly shoots and heads.

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