

Veronica L. SPEEDWELL, BROOKLIME

Veronica persica Poiret, PERSIAN SPEEDWELL. Annual, taprooted and fibrous-rooted (along lower internodes), (1–)several-stemmed at base, prostrate or decumbent to ascending, in range 5–20 cm tall; shoots sparsely to densely villous or pilose. **Stems:** cylindric, 0.6–0.8 mm diameter, lower stem often purple-red, internodes 8–35 mm long, hairs mixed long and very short. **Leaves:** opposite decussate at the lowermost nodes, helically alternate above but most of these = leaflike bractlets, simple, short-petiolate to sessile (bractlets), without stipules; petiole 0.5–4 mm long, villous below, villous-ciliate on edges; blade (leaves and bractlets) widely ovate to widely depressed ovate, 4.3–25 × 4.2–19 mm, with scattered or many hairs, truncate to broadly cordate at base, crenate-dentate to crenate-serrate or coarsely dentate on margins, obtuse to rounded at tip, with 3–5 veins from base slightly sunken on upper surface and conspicuously raised on lower surface, lower surface slightly lighter and often with conspicuous hairs along veins. **Inflorescence:** leafy raceme (alternatively interpreted as having cauline leaves with axillary solitary flowers), terminal, 120–160 mm long, with 1 flower per node, hairy like shoot; peduncle 20–35 mm long; bractlet subtending pedicel as large as leaves at base of raceme, reduced upward; pedicel (10–)14–27 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, in range 7–8(–12) mm across; **calyx** 4(–5)-lobed; tube 0.5 mm long, villous; lobes unequal, lanceolate, the long lobe ca. 3.9 × 2 mm, the other lobes 2.7–3.2 × 1.2–1.8 mm, lobes increasing 2× in fruit, green, acute to acuminate at tip, the long lobe entire and ciliate on margins, with 3 principal veins and aging veiny, surfaces glabrous or sparsely hairy and initially with some inconspicuous glandular hairs; **corolla** 4-lobed, strong violet-blue and white with conspicuous nectar lines; tube ± 0.7 mm long, white, with conspicuous, colorless short hairs concealing orifice; lobes overlapping, 4–4.5 mm long, tapered and weakly clawed at base, rounded at tip, the upper lobe 3.2–4.5 mm wide, the other lobes 2–2.5 mm wide with lateral lobes equal and intermediate in width and the basal lobe the narrowest; **stamens** 2, fused to base of corolla tube; filaments fusiform and slightly sigmoidal, 2.7–3 mm long, white; anther basifixed, dithecal, 0.7–1.2 mm long, dark blue-violet or dark blue, arrow-shaped at base, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, inversely conic compressed side-to-side, 0.5–0.8 × 0.8–1 × 0.5 mm, lacking notch at tip, green, hairy above midpoint, 2-chambered, each chamber with 5–6(–8) pendulous ovules; style increasing width from base to tip, 1.5–2 mm long increasing to 3 mm long in fruit, pale lavender aging darker; stigma capitate, pale lavender, entire, hairy. **Fruit:** capsule loculicidal and septicidal, 2-valved, in range to 14-seeded, with 2 divergent, spreading lobes, compressed broadly heart-shaped, 3–4.5 × 5–7.5 mm, 2 mm thick, straw-colored to brown, keeled, deeply and broadly notched with notch 0.7–1.2 mm deep, hairy on upper portion, with glandular heads especially along keel, veiny on valves; style persistent; calyx lobes spreading. **Seed:** ovate to round in outline, 1.2–2.3 × 0.8–1.8 mm, flattened top-to-bottom, pale brown, cup-shaped on lower side and sometimes inrolled, transversely ridged. Early March–late June.

Naturalized. A delicate annual known from several localities in the central SMM mostly growing in shade beneath trees, e.g., at Malibu Creek State Park and King Gillette Ranch SMMNRA, although expected elsewhere because it is a successful weed throughout Europe and North America. The dainty blue and white flowers of our veronicas are easy to

recognize. In *Veronica persica* the flowers appear to be solitary, axillary to alternate leaves on long pedicels, although the flowering portion of each shoot technically is better described as a leafy raceme.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson