Beta vulgaris L. subsp. ***maritima*** (L.) Arcang., SEA BEET. Annual to perennial herb, somewhat halophytic, often growing in a tight cluster of several plants, rosetted, thick-taprooted, 1–several- stemmed at base, ascending to decumbent (prostrate), in range 20–65 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, essentially glabrous, not aromatic; taproot when fruiting to 25 mm diameter, tough, not fleshy, light brown to tannish but pink beneath surface and between splits, internally white and somewhat woody. **Stems:** conspicuously ridged, to 7 mm diameter, with broad ridges descending from cauline leaves, inflorescence branches, and bracts. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole channeled, 30–55 mm long, sometimes beet red when not exposed to sun; blade oblanceolate to ovate or narrowly triangular, 30–135 × 15–40 mm, abruptly tapered at base, entire to weakly crenate-wavy on margins, rounded to obtuse at tip, pinnately veined with midrib slightly raised on upper surface and raised on lower surface, glabrous or along midrib sparsely short-strigose on upper surface and with some spreading hairs on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** terminal paniclelike arrays of many condensed axillary cymes (glomes, glomerules) alternate on ascending, spikelike branches, 225–345 mm long, lateral branches several–15 along main rachis and in fruit appearing interrupted by some elongation of internodes, glome of (1–)2–3(–5) sessile flowers embedded in axis, bracteate, glabrous; bract subtending array leaflike, sessile, lanceolate, 20–35 × 5–7 mm, long-tapered at base, wavy on margins, acute at tip with fine point; lateral branch 10–115 mm long, terminal portion of rachis 40–150 mm long, conspicuously ridged with ridges descending from branches and bracts; bract subtending glome fused to short glome axis, lanceolate with short point at tip, 2–11 × 0.7–2.5 mm, entire or becoming wavy; glome axis and receptacles of flowers completely fused. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 2–3 mm across at anthesis; hypanthium cup-shaped, short; **perianth (sepals)** 5, subequal to unequal, ascending, oblong to obovate or elliptic, 1.5–2.5 × 1–1.2 mm, green and ± fleshy, convex to keeled on back, entire and membranous on margins, rounded and membranous at tip, usually 2 sepals ± hooded and with keel forming a subterminal conic projection, persistent; **stamens** 5, opposite sepals, fused to thin rim of hypanthium; filaments flared at base, 0.4–1.2 mm long, light green; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, oblong, 1–1.1 × 0.5–0.7 mm, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, about 1/2-inferior becoming more so in fruit, at anthesis free from hypanthium but with basal portion immersed to 0.2 mm into receptacle and glome axis, hemispheric to ± 3-faced pyramidal with rounded angles, minutely pebbled on exposed surface (colliculate), 1-chambered with 1 horizontal ovule attached at base; style absent; stigmas (2–)3, at anthesis erect or ascending and 0.3–0.6 mm long increasing and spreading to slightly recurved in fruit, papillate-hairy. **Fruit:** multiple fruit with 1–5 achenes (= all flowers of glome) fused with and embedded 3/4 into glome axis and receptacle tissue, partially covered by persistent sepals; multiple fruit irregular and rocklike with variously oriented fleshy sepals, ca. 4–7 mm across, brown, sepals grooved between keel and margins. **Seed:** spheroid to ellipsoid with protruding radicle, 1.5–2.5 × 1.4–1.8 mm, dark brown to reddish brown, smooth; embryo whitish, surrounding white perisperm. Late June–late October.

Naturalized. Taprooted herb rarely observed in range associated with salt marsh. *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima* is the wild form from which cultivated beets were selected in ancient Europe. Sea beet has a tough, inedible, dull-colored taproot and leaves much

smaller than garden forms. The multiple fruit of *Beta* is unlike all other chenopods in California. From each glome, the ovaries of the several flowers (condensed cyme) are fused with and partially embedded in the glome axis, so that the dispersal unit is rocklike, commonly having more than one achene. Consequently, more than one seed can germinate at a time, so that plants then grow in a tight cluster, with each plant having its distinctive taproot.

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