

Heterocodon rariflorum Nutt., RAREFLOWER HETEROCODON, WESTERN PEARLFLOWER.

Annual, lax, taprooted, 1-stemmed at base, unbranched or sparsely branched, \pm decumbent, 5–30 cm tall; shoots slender with \pm widely spaced nodes, = an inflorescence with leaflike bractlets and commonly a flower at each node but opposite the bractlet, sparsely hirsute.

Stems: (2–)3-angled and narrowly ridged (slightly winged), < 1 mm diameter, with ridge descending from each leaf, having hairs predominantly along ridges. **Leaves (bractlets):** helically alternate, simple, sessile and somewhat clasping, without stipules; blade round to broadly ovate or obovate, 2–6.5(–10) mm long, mostly cordate at base, dentate and sparsely bristly on margins with tooth commonly with terminal bristle, with acute to obtuse tooth or rounded at tip; pinnately veined, glabrous. **Inflorescence:** spikelike = a terminal leafy shoot with small, cleistogamous subsessile flowers at the lower nodes and later flowers open and showy; bractlet = leaf blade; pedicel short. **Cleistogamous flower:** radial, bisexual, < 3 mm across; calyx 3–4-lobed, green; tube short; lobes \pm leaflike, unequal, widely triangular to triangular-ovate, 1.8–3 \times 1.7–2.5 mm; **corolla** weakly developed or abortive; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, short-oblong, 3-chambered with many ovules. **Fruit:** capsule, many-seeded, inversely conic and 3-angled.

Native. This species was not made available during the project and needs to be described carefully from living materials, because the literature mostly describes the bell-shaped, showy, blue to purple open flowers.

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