

Plagiobothrys canescens Benth. var. *canescens*, VALLEY POPCORNFLOWER. Annual, taprooted, rosetted, several-stemmed at base, prostrate to decumbent (ascending), 10–25(–60) cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, short-villous to short-villous tomentose, never hispid, often with purplish dye present in aging lower stems and leaves; tap root distinctly reddish when extracted from soil. **Stems:** cylindric, to 3.5 mm diameter, with a pair of fine, low ridges descending from each lower cauline leaf, tough, pale green, the short hairs mostly radiating. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate (basal leaves) and sessile (cauline leaves), without stipules; petiole winged, 3–8 × 0.7–1 mm; blade narrowly oblanceolate, 40–45(–50) × 3–4(–7) mm (basal leaves) and narrowly oblanceolate to linear, 14–30 × 1.7–3.3(–10) mm (cauline leaves), not clasping at base, entire, acute at tip, midrib only conspicuous and raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** racemelike (cyme) appearing like a leafy spike, terminal, somewhat coiled in bud but straight in fruit, 40–200(–250) mm long, forked or not, loosely and many-flowered, bracteate, soft-pubescent like shoot; forks of axes < 25°; bractlets not subtending but ± opposite flower and slightly lower on rachis, leaflike, 3–20 mm long, densely strigose-pilose, persistent but typically not closely associated with pedicel; pedicel < 0.5 mm long, always present. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 2–2.5(–3.5) mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, bell-shaped, at anthesis 2.5–3 mm long increasing to 3–4.5(–6) mm in fruit, externally densely strigose-pilose; tube ± 1 mm long, internally glabrous, becoming shallower as fruit matures, developing as a pale greenish to whitish ring in fruit; lobes erect, equal, narrowly triangular, 1.5–2 mm long increasing 2× in fruit, each with a midvein, externally the hairs rusty brown above midpoint, inner surface with strigose white hairs, loosely arched over fruits and not separating or abscising around circumference; **corolla** 5-lobed, trumpetlike (salverform), 3–4 mm across, in bud with 5 small dimples at top of throat beneath calyx lobes; tube cylindric except expanded at base by ovary, lower portion 0.3–0.4 mm long, whitish, early abscised as ovary lobes enlarge, with 4 internal, crestlike ridges corresponding to gaps between ovary lobes, upper portion 0.8–1 mm long, yellowish, with minute appendages next to stamens, with 5 shallowly 2-lobed pads at base of throat and opposite lobes, yellowish, papillate-hairy; throat spreading, 0.6–0.7 mm long, white, lacking raised, linear ribs; lobes spreading, roundish or oblong, ± 1 mm long and wide, white; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla tube at midpoint, alternate with corolla lobes, included; filaments < anther length, compressed side-to-side; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ± 0.3 mm long, orange-yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, deeply 4-lobed, 0.3–0.4 mm long, green, with medial rib on each lobe; style attached to ovary base and arising in center between ovary lobes, ± 0.5 mm long, whitish; stigma capitate, 4-lobed; base of ovary dome-shaped, ± 0.6 mm diameter, becoming more conic as fruit matures. **Fruits:** nutlets, (1–)3–4, vertical and weakly attached as maturing, ± ovoid but constricted abruptly at tip forming a prominent beak, 1.5–1.7 mm long, frosty tan or light brown when mature; outer (dorsal) face convex with low, rounded ribs and few, scattered tubercles, the medial rib prominent, slightly zigzagged, typically extending from beak to base (sometimes absent at very base), the lateral ribs 1 or 2 on each side with the outermost ones often forming a loop on fruit margin, the transverse ribs 5–6 on each side of medial rib with area between transverse ribs flat-papillate the inner (ventral) side keeled on beak, with short ribs ± radiating from attachment scar and more prominently papillate, the scar where fruit attached slightly raised, resembling a bicycle saddle, the upper, narrow

part \pm in line with beak keel, with a rimmed, circular to vertically elliptic vascular bundle scar just above the expanded lower portion of scar. Late February–mid-April.

Native. A seldom collected spring annual, occurring on open ground in mixed stands of native and naturalized annuals, probably most easily found in the northeastern corner (Chatsworth), but expected elsewhere. *Plagiobothrys canescens* has a well-developed basal rosette and several decumbent shoots diverging from its tap root, which is reddish when fresh. The small flowers are difficult to study with a hand lens, but the beautifully sculptured nutlets are fairly easy to examine by folding back the calyx lobes; they are erect in their original positions, versus the horizontal nutlets of *P. nothofulvus*.

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