

TARWEED

Hemizonia fasciculata (DC.)

Torr. & Gray

Plant Symbol = HEFA

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center



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 Abrams & Ferris (1960)

Alternate Names

Clustered tarweed

Uses

Ethnobotanic: This tarweed is one of the tarweeds used in pinole, a staple food in the diets of the Indian people in Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Santa Ynez, California (Timbrook 1993). The seeds were toasted and then pounded into a black, dry flour with an agreeable taste. The roots of several *Hemizonia* species were eaten by the Miwok, who considered them to be an important part of their diet. The steam from boiling *Hemizonia fasciculata* was inhaled by the Kumeyaay to relieve headaches.

Wildlife: The dark seeds (achenes) of tarweeds are used as food by many birds and small mammals, including mourning doves, quail, blackbirds, finches,

Oregon juncos, California horned larks, western meadowlarks, American pipit, sparrows, towhees, chipmunks, ground squirrels, and mice. Cottontail rabbits, ground squirrels, and chipmunks eat the plants.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Sunflower Family (Asteraceae). *Hemizonia fasciculata* is an annual herb, 0.5-10 dm tall. The stems are glabrous to sparsely short-bristly. The lower leaves are 3.5-15 cm, dentate to deeply lobed, and bristly. The upper cauline leaves are linear, entire, and appressed to the stem. The inflorescence is open to dense, with the 4.5-5.5 mm bell-shaped involucre, with 5 deep ray flowers and 6 disc flowers having yellow corollas and black anthers. The fruits are 2.5-5 mm beaked achenes.

Distribution

For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site. *Hemizonia fascicularis* is common in coastal grasslands and woodlands below 900 m elevations. It grows in southern California on the central coast, southern outer Coast Ranges, from southwestern California to central Baja California.

Establishment

Hemizonia species seeds ripen in late summer, usually in August in California. After gathering, seeds can be stored in a cool, dry place for at least a year and still maintain viability. *Hemizonia* species require well-drained, fairly dry soils with full sun. These annual species produce prolific seeds, and can be planted directly in the soil or in seed flats. Plant seeds at the soil surface or plant 1/8" to 1/4" in a well-drained soil. Water seedlings as the soil dries to stimulate growth. It is best to plant seeds in the fall. Fertilization stimulates growth and seed production.

Management

Traditional Resource Management: Resource management of tarweed includes the following:

- Seeds were distributed during the process of gathering seeds through seed beating.

- Burning occurred during September and October after ripened seeds were harvested. Grassland species were burned for plant improvement by the tribes throughout California.
- Seeds were planted from wild plants. A Diegueño woman reported her people always cleared a small spot near their dwelling to plant seeds of plants with greens, seeds, and roots.
- Ownership of seed-gathering grounds promoted long term care and sustainable harvest practices.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

HEFA is widely available through native plant nurseries within its range. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

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