

Polygonum argyrocoleon Kunze., PERSIAN KNOTWEED, SILVEERHEATH KNOTWEED. Annual, taprooted, several-stemmed at base, with ascending to decumbent shoots, generally < 50 cm tall; shoots somewhat 2-dimensional (\pm plagiotropic), with 2 leaf forms having the uppermost ones markedly reduced (\leq flower clusters), bluish green, glabrous. **Stems:** finely ridged, to 4 mm diameter, with many ridges descending from each leaf, tough but not wiry, somewhat striped, often with reddish nodes, straight to somewhat zigzagged, internodes 3–30 mm long, nodes slightly swollen especially on principal axes, slightly glaucous. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, short-petiolate to sessile, with stipules; stipules (2) fused forming sheath around stem node (ocrea), membranous, 4–8 mm long, straw-colored to light brown, with raised veins from stem ridges, soon disintegrating into persistent fibers; petiole flattish, to 1.5 mm long; blade lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, 15–50 \times 1.5–8 mm, flat, long-tapered at base, entire on translucent margins, acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib and sometimes lateral veins raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** spikelike cyme, with an axillary cyme at every node throughout canopy but having reduced bract (cauline leaf) and upper shoot appearing nearly leafless, each axillary cyme 4–6-flowered, bracteate, glabrous; bract subtending cyme inconspicuous, never overtopping flowers; bractlet subtending pedicel ocrealike and scarious but open, < 1 mm long; pedicel somewhat compressed, 1–2 mm long, whitish, enclosed within ocrea. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, closed **perianth** 5-lobed, 1.8–2.4 mm long increasing and expanding in fruit; tube vase-shaped, fused less than 1/4; lobes petal-like and exserted from ocrealike bract, overlapping, subequal, oblong to obovate, light green with pink margins and tip (white or rose), not keeled; **stamens** 7–8, included; filaments arising from rim of perianth tube; anthers dorsifixed, conspicuously dithecal, 0.2 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid and 3-sided, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 3, fused at base, spreading, stout, colorless; stigma minute, capitate. **Fruit:** achene, abscised within persistent perianth, ovoid and unequally 3-sided, 1.3–2.3 mm long, faces subequal, slightly convex, glossy brown, smooth, edges blunt.

Naturalized. Annual weed collected historically on the edge of the range near Santa Monica but not observed recently. *Polygonum argyrocoleon* is upright in comparison with the ubiquitous, mat-forming weed *P. aviculare*. Flowers of Persian knotweed apparently never open.

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