



Photos by Lorna Allen

SMALL-FLOWERED PAINTBRUSH

Castilleja parviflora Bong.

FIGWORT FAMILY (SCROPHULARIACEAE)

Plants: Perennial herb 10–40 (sometimes 50) cm tall, loosely clumped from a somewhat woody base, nearly hairless or with a thin mix of long, soft, nonglandular hairs and short glandular hairs.

Leaves: Alternate, lanceolate, 1.5-5 cm long, 3- to 5-lobed, smooth or sparsely soft-hairy; side lobes much narrower than the middle part of the blade; lowermost leaf often unlobed.

Flowers: Yellowish-green, slender, tubular, 12-28 mm long, 2-lipped, almost hidden in the axil of rose-pink, magenta, crimson or white bracts, in a dense spike, 3-15 cm long; bracts soft-hairy, lance- to egg-shaped, tipped with 3-5-lobes, about 12-25 mm long; calyx tubular, 4-lobed, 1-2 cm long, same colour as bracts; corolla tubular, with a slender, beak-like upper lip 3-7 mm long, 3+ times longer than the thickened, 1-2 mm, 3-toothed lower lip; stigmas clearly 2-lobed, obvious, blackish; stamens 4; ??- July-August (-September).

Fruits: Smooth, egg-shaped capsules, 6-9 mm (Hickman 1993) or 8-11 mm (Douglas, Meidinger et al. 2000) long, splitting lengthwise; seeds numerous, wedge-shaped, covered with a loose, shallowly net-ridged coat, (1)-1.5(-2) mm long.

Habitat: Moist to mesic meadows, heaths, streambanks on turfs and rock outcrops in montane to alpine zones.

Status: S1

Notes: This species has also been called small-flowered Indian-paintbrush and mountain Indian paintbrush. • Current status is Global G5?; United States NNR (Alaska S2S4, California SNR, Oregon SNR, Washington SNR) and Canada NNR (Alberta S1, British Columbia S4, Yukon Territory S2). • The roots of these plants were used by the Ute for treating bowel troubles. The Apache mixed the root bark with other substances to make a dye for skins, especially deer skins. • The flowers were used by Karok children as make-believe woodpecker scalps, a form of money or wealth.

