

The Weekly Plant 22 July 2012

Common names: woody crinklemat, shrubby coldenia, rat-ear coldenia, oreja de perro

Scientific name: *Tiquilia canescens* (formerly *Coldenia canescens*)¹

TAV location:

Common in almost all vacant lots on south end of Galileo Lane. Some plants are close to the road.

Discussion:

Woody crinklemat – the name tells most of the story. The plant is perennial and the stems are woody, almost brittle. It grows as a mat covering the ground, growing from a single stem. Plants more than a foot across are not uncommon. At about 8” in height it earns the title of “subshrub”. (Where’s the crinkle? A related species has crinkly leaves, though woody crinklemat does not.)

Woody crinklemat might also be called woolly crinklemat. Both sides of the leaves are woolly with hairs, as are the newest stems. The leaves are gray and the hairs a white-gray – canescent – giving rise to the plant’s scientific name. The stiff stems keep this plant from being soft to the touch but at least there are no thorns or spines.

The flowers are small, about ¼” wide, white to pale pink. They are funnel-shaped with five rounded lobes, usually held singly rather than in clusters. Because of this, the display is not very showy. The flowers appeared in spring and are now returning with the monsoon rains.

This plant is found on dry, rocky slopes. In my yard, the crinklemats were getting a bit dehydrated-looking, but have revived wonderfully with the rains. I could find very little information on this plant other than its range (throughout the southwest and into Texas). It’s not in any weed resources I checked and it is in my wildflower books. Woody crinklemat would make a nice, short, drought-resistant groundcover in a landscaped area.



A slope on the west side of South Galileo. The short, dark, rounded plants are woody crinklemat.



Top: plant form. Bottom: the underside of the plant, showing the spreading branches are not rooted in the soil.



Flower close-ups showing front and side view (note funnel shape with flared lobes).

Previous Weekly Plants

Several Weekly Plants are blooming again with the monsoon rains. Skeleton weed (22Apr) is very showy now, with the deep green stems covered with tiny pale pink and white flowers. The orange flowers of desert globemallow (1Apr) are also appearing, and I’ve seen a creosote (27May) with a few flowers. Good news for the red yucca (29Apr)! The plant I know was infested with aphids is now aphid-free.

¹GRIN Online Database is the source of the currently accepted scientific name.