

# **MALVALES** (Malvalids)

## **Mallows**



**(10 Families Worldwide)**

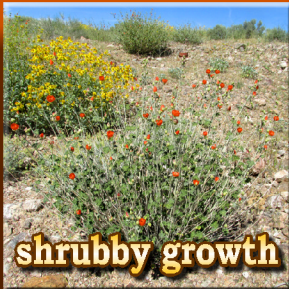


# MALVACEAE

## (Globemallows)

### Desert Globemallow

(*Sphaeralcea ambigua*)



shrubby growth

US93; Hoover Dam; LMNRA



smooth, erect stems

Virgin Mtns; Clark Co.; NV



May

Christmas Tree Pass; Newberry Mountains; NV



cup-shaped flowers

US93; Hoover Dam; LMNRA



furry, lobed leaves

Valley of Fire SP; NV

- Flowers:** cyanthiform; open panicle; 5 petals, yellow/red stamens; orange, red, pink (rare), yellow base; 1"
- Stems:** sprawling to erect; numerous from caudex; unbranched; suffrutescent, canescent; green; 40"
- Leaves:** triangular to cordate; 3-lobed, wavy to crenate; alternate; petioled, crinkled, canescent; green; 2"
- Blooms:** March to July (year-round depending on region and precipitation)
- Range:** southwestern US; northwestern Mexico
- Habitat:** dry, alkaline, sandy to rocky; desert to pinyon-juniper woodlands; Lower to Upper Sonoran LZs

#### Notes:

common; perennial; shrubby growth to 4' tall and wide in the sw US from w NM west to se CA, south to Baja and nw MEX at elevations of 500-7,500'; dehiscent, cylindric schizocarp fruit comprised of 9+ mericarps, each bearing 2 seeds; 8 subspecies (growth form, leaves, flower/stamen color variable); stellate hairs; aka Apricot Globemallow, Sore Eye Poppy, Desert Hollyhock, etc.; traditionally used for food and various medical applications (rheumatism, stomachache, catharsis, colds, sores, etc.); important food/host plant for numerous reliant butterfly species

Mojave presence: native

#### Comments:

This very common mallow with its showy orange flowers is easily recognizable, as it's a reliable early spring bloomer--except when its flowers occur in their rare alternate colors, white (left) or pink (right), such as these at



Mv2

Red Rock Canyon NCA.



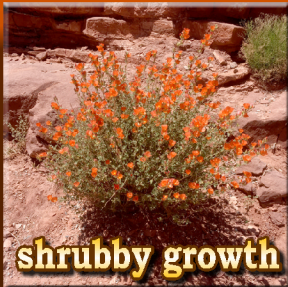


# MALVACEAE

## (Globemallows)

### Small-Leaf Globemallow

(*Sphaeralcea parvifolia*)



**shrubby growth**

West Rim; Grand Cyn; AZ



**hairy, erect stems**

West Rim; Grand Cyn; AZ



**May**

West Rim; Grand Canyon; AZ



**fuzzy mass of stamens**

West Rim; Grand Cyn; AZ



**crinkled leaves**

West Rim; Grand Cyn; AZ

- Flowers:** cyanthiform; dense raceme; 5 petals, many entangled stamens in fuzzy yellow mass; **orange**; .75"
- Stems:** erect; numerous from caudex; unbranched; suffrutescent, canescent; **green**; 38"
- Leaves:** ovate to round; entire or lobed to toothed; alternate; long petiole, crinkled, pubescent; **green**; 2"
- Blooms:** May to September
- Range:** western US
- Habitat:** dry, sandy to gravelly; desert scrub to p-j/pine woodlands; Upper Sonoran to Transition LZs

#### Notes:

common; perennial; grows to 3' (usually less) in the western US from w NM/CO west to the Sierra Nevada range at elevations of 4,000-9,000'; stellate hairs; dehiscent, wheel-shaped **schizocarp** fruit comprised of 9-12 mericarps, each bearing 1 gray or black seed; 0 subspecies; aka **Small-Flower Globemallow**, **Nelson Globemallow**; important food source for various mammals (e.g. bighorn sheep, burros, pronghorn, deer), rodents, birds, tortoises, etc.; traditionally used to treat sores, cuts, constipation, etc.

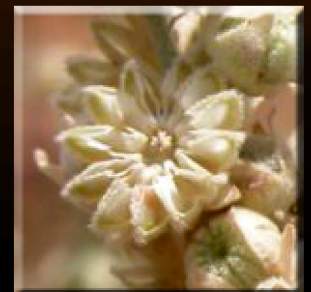
Mojave presence: native

#### Comments:

It is quite difficult to distinguish species of globemallows, especially where their ranges overlap and hybridization is common. For this species, the inflorescence is dense with flowers, its leaves either **lack** lobes completely, or if present, are **shallow**; and its fruit are in a **wheel-shaped** schizocarp (right). Still, in the field,

**Mv3**

they all seem to look alike!



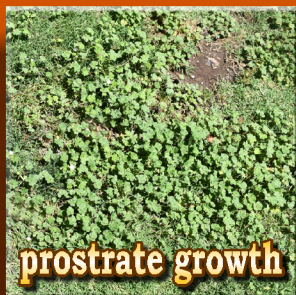


# MALVACEAE

## (Mallows)

### Common Mallow

(*Malva neglecta*)



prostrate growth

LVM GC; Las Vegas, NV



branched stems

LVM GC; Las Vegas, NV



May

Las Vegas Municipal Golf Course; Las Vegas, NV



5-lobed flowers

LVM GC; Las Vegas, NV



lobed, wrinkled leaves

LVM GC; Las Vegas, NV

- Flowers:** tubular; axillary fascicles of 2-6; 5 spread petals, dark parallel veins; white, pink, lilac ; 1.2"
- Stems:** prostrate to ascendant; solitary; branched from base; hairy (stellate/simple hairs); green; 24"
- Leaves:** orbicular to reniform, cordate base; lobed (5-7), crenate, wrinkled; alternate; petioled; green; 2"
- Blooms:** May to September (later depending on precipitation)
- Range:** cosmopolitan (native to Eurasia, north Africa)
- Habitat:** moist, varied soils; roadsides, fields, disturbed areas, etc.; Lower Sonoran to Transition LZs

#### Notes:

common; annual/biennial/perennial; introduced, weedy growth to over 2' throughout most of NA at elevations up to 9,000'; indehiscent, pubescent, ring-shaped **schizocarp** fruit comprised of 12-15 mericarps, each bearing 1 seed; aka **Buttonweed**, **Cheeseplant**, **Roundleaf Mallow**, etc.; entirely edible; infusions/decoctions traditionally used to treat numerous medical issues (sores, swelling, broken bones, gastrointestinal problems, as an emetic, etc.)

**Mojave presence:** introduced

#### Comments:

This introduced plant is not a Mojave species, per se, but persists as a weed only in locations that receive adequate and reliable watering, such as gardens, lawns, and golf courses. The specimens shown here on the Las Vegas Municipal Golf Course are the only ones I have encountered. Growing abundantly with several species of clovers, the plants' similar prostrate habit at first concealed their true identity, but the wrinkled, lobed leaves--unlike the distinctly trifoliate leaves of clovers--inevitably gave

Mv4

them away as mallows!



# MALVACEAE

## (Mallows)

### Desert Five-Spot

(*Eremalche rotundifolia*)



typical habitat

Furnace Crk; DVNP; CA



erect, bristly stems

Lake Mead NRA; NV



April

Lake Mead National Recreation Area; NV



name stake spots

Furnace Crk; DVNP; CA



crinkled leaves

Lake Mead NRA; NV

- Flowers:** globose; solitary\*; 5 overlapped petals, red basal spot (nectar guide) on each; pink to lilac; 2"
- Stems:** erect; solitary; sometimes branched at base; pilose (soft hairy) to hispid (bristly); reddish; to 24"
- Leaves:** cordate to round; crenate; basal to cauline alternate (sparse); long petiole, hispid; green; 2.5"
- Blooms:** March to May
- Range:** southwestern US; northwestern Mexico
- Habitat:** dry, sandy to gravelly; open desert scrub, washes, slopes, etc.; Lower Sonoran Life Zone

#### Notes:

uncommon; herbaceous annual; grows to 2' (usually much less) in the Mojave Desert south into Baja and the Sonoran Desert of nw MEX at elevations up to 4,000'; ring of pink stigmas surround smaller pink stamens; wheel-shaped schizocarp fruit divided into numerous mericarps, each bearing 1 seed; host to larvae of the Large White Skipper

Mojave presence: native

#### Comments:

Though uncommon, this species is easily recognized; in bloom, the plants show off their unmistakable spherical flowers sporting 5 interior dark red nectar spots to guide insects to their treasure. \*Though usually solitary, the flowers sometimes form a corymb inflorescent (left). After the bloom, petals fall away, revealing a wheel-shaped fruit divided into many mericarps (right).



Hoover Dam; LMNRA; NV



Furnace Crk; DVNP; CA



# MALVACEAE

## (Mallows)

### Common Hollyhock

#### (*Alcea rosea*)



there goes the neighborhood!

Goodsprings, NV



stout, erect stems

Goodsprings, NV



April

Goodsprings, Nevada



large, showy bloom

Goodsprings, NV



broad, lobed leaves

Goodsprings, NV

- Flowers:** crateriform; terminal spike or solitary; 5 petals, \*perfect to pistillate; \*pink to red; to 8"
- Stems:** erect; singular to few; usually unbranched; stout, hairy (adpressed to bristly); lt green; to 120"
- Leaves:** cordate; lobed, serrate; alternate; petioled, broad, bristly; dk green; 4-12"
- Blooms:** May to September
- Range:** cosmopolitan (native to Asia)
- Habitat:** moist to dry, sandy to gravelly; gardens, roadsides, fields, meadows, etc.; Lower Sonoran LZ

#### Notes:

common; annual/biennial/perennial; introduced as a cultivated ornamental from Eurasia, grows to 8' (usually less) at elevations up to ~3,000'; readily self seeding, \*cultivated plants present a wide variety of flower colors, \*numerous stamens fused into tube surrounding solitary pistil; brown, ring-shaped schizocarp fruit comprised of 18-40 bi-sectional mericarps, each bearing 1 seed; aka **Hollyhock**; nectar attracts hummingbirds, insects (butterflies, bees, etc.); used as an emollient, anti-inflammatory, and to relieve soreness, coughs, and gastrointestinal issues, etc.

**Mojave presence:** accidental/escaped cultivation

#### Comments:

This hollyhock is not a Mojave plant, thus is quite rare in the region outside of urban gardens. The specimen shown here along a roadside in Goodsprings, NV, in May of 2016 was obviously an escapee from a nearby residence, having sprouted from seeds blown into the desert by wind.