President’s Message:
Eriophyllum jepsonii and E. confertiflorum var. laxiflorum in Kern County
by Rich Spjut

THE ILLUSTRATION ON THE LEFT, ABOVE IS from W. L. Jepson (1925) Manual of the Flowering Plants of California. It shows:

(a) “habit of plant” of Eriophyllum confertiflorum (DeCandolle 1833) var. confertiflorum,
(b) disk flower with young fruit at base bristly at its tip, and
(c) one ray flower of 5-6 ray flowers per flower head.

To the botanically untrained eye, each ray flower might appear to be one of 5-6 petals. But these are the ray flowers encircling many disk flowers (10-35, JM2 – The Jepson Manual 2nd ed.). At the end of each leafy stem appears to be 10 flower heads tightly crowded together, each slightly elevated at the base by a very short peduncle, best seen on the far-right stem.

The illustration, above right, was extracted from Jaeger’s (1940) Desert Wildflowers that he identified as E. confertiflorum var. laxiflorum. As one can easily see, the flower heads of var. laxiflorum are on longer peduncles.

Recently, I received comments through Calflora questioning my identification of E. jepsonii that I reported on Calflora from Cerro Noroeste (Mt. Abel) near the Ventura County line, accompanied by images of the plant in the field and the specimen I collected at that time. My report references an area south of the JM2 eflora-reported geographic range of the species, mainly found along the Inner Coast Ranges. The comments and my rebuttal to those comments are also on Calflora, Observation of Eriophyllum jepsonii — Calflora.

The following key was extracted from the JM2 eflora for those character features applied to distinguish E. jepsonii from E. confertiflorum and its varieties.

Heads 1–5; peduncle 5–10(14) cm; ray flowers 5–8, ray 6–10 mm – SnFrB, SCoRI.................E. jepsonii
Heads 3–30+; peduncle 0–2.5(9) cm; ray flowers (0)4–6(8), ray 2–5 mm..........................E. confertiflorum
Heads 10–30+; peduncle 0–1(2) cm..... var. confertiflorum
Heads 3–10; peduncle 0.5–2.5(9) cm.... var. tanacetiflorum

An image of the Mt. Abel specimen (below, top) and plant I photographed on Piute Mountain (below, bottom) are shown below. The relatively long peduncles and fewer flower heads per peduncle distinguishes E. jepsonii from E. confertiflorum. These features agree with JM2 key characters given.

In my draft the Trees and Shrubs of Kern County, I also recognize E. confertiflorum var. laxiflorum (Gray 1883) in Kern County. Photos of this plant can be seen on World Botanical Associates webpage, Eriophyllum (worldbotanical.com). This variety was also recognized by Jepson (1925) and by others while...
Cactus and Oak Workparty: Flood Damage Control & Seed Collection
by Lucy Clark

On September 1st, 8 HARDY KERN CNPS-ERS joined 3 people from The Nature Conservancy’s Randall Preserve staff: our friend Rachel Mason, her boss, our older friend, Zach Principe, and the new biologist, Maria Viteri, for an amazing day near Caliente. The Caliente Creek had flooded, and all of our oaks inside their green tubes were surrounded by grass, weeds, and MUD! These were swept by floodwater to form a miniature ‘house’ for each plant, and had to be removed by hand. The leaves were washed with creek water, and stone edgings were reset.

After this work, we collected seeds to be planted at Keene’s Tweedy Creek location. Zach, Clyde, and Lucy collected seeds from Encelia actoni (brittlebush), Lepidospartum squamatum (scale-broom), Asclepias erosa (milkweed), Peritoma arborea (bladderpod), and a few more species along the road. Gene, Claudia, Bill, Fred, and Paul searched the side of the creek for cones of Pinus sabiniana (Grey Pine), and banged them around to retrieve their seeds. I understand there were many pricked fingers!

The weather was lovely, and the signs of the flood were impressive. The fact that our little trees survived was amazing!

Next work morning is Saturday, September 23rd. If you want details, please contact me at lucyg391@gmail.com. We would enjoy your company and efforts.

Thank You
... to Brandon Dunn for his May presentation on the exciting proposed Kern Gateway Trail where outdoor enthusiasts could enjoy hiking the Kern River canyon.
... to Peyton Ellas sharing the story of her conceiving and creating a native plant nursery in Springville – The Blue Oak Nursery.
... to Megan Means who told us all about restoration efforts at BLM’s Atwell Island, whose attributes include being an important wintering area for migratory birds.

CNPS is the leader for providing reliable information on California native plants and plant conservation. Comprehensive information about California’s flora and vegetation communities is available throughout the state for conservation and educational purposes. CNPS’s leadership influences personal ethics and actions, as well as public policy for native plant protection.

Eriophyllum confertiflorum var. tanacetiflorum, described by Greene in 1891 as a species, is of limited geographical range in the central Sierra Nevada. The type specimen lacks ray flowers.