

**Draft Key to the *Malacothamnus* (Malvaceae) of
Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Kern Counties, CA
by Keir Morse
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Comments, corrections, and questions welcome at kmorse@rsabg.org

1. Calyx bracts 1/3 (rarely to 1/2) calyx length; calyx lobes tube, length generally $\pm 1.5 \times$ width; plants generally 1-5 m tall
2. Stem hairs spreading and obvious to the naked eye; leaf blade 5–20 cm long, thick, upper surface generally densely hairy; branches generally stout *M. davidsonii*
2. Stem hairs minute, not or barely distinguishable to the naked eye; leaf blade generally 2–6 cm long, thin, upper surface generally green, sparsely hairy; branches generally slender *M. fasciculatus*
1. Calyx bracts generally 1/2 calyx length; calyx lobes $\pm =$ to \gg tube, length generally $1.5\text{--}5 \times$ width; plants rarely > 2 m tall
3. Buds clearly pointed; leaves and infl often somewhat sticky due to glandular hairs; leaves truncate to cordate at base *M. marrubioides*
3. Buds generally rounded to slightly pointed; leaves and infl generally not sticky; leaves cordate at base *M. orbiculatus*

Notes:

- This key was developed for the San Gabriel Mountains, so might not work as well outside of that area.
- Calyx bracts are a whorl of three bracts beneath each calyx.

Malacothamnus davidsonii

- Los Angeles County
- Occasionally hybridizes with *M. fasciculatus*.

Malacothamnus fasciculatus

- Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties
- Plants in this area have historically been included in *M. f.* var. *laxiflorus* which is currently (and probably incorrectly) lumped under *M. f.* var. *fasciculatus*.
- Intergrades with *M. orbiculatus* where ranges come together.
- Occasionally hybridizes with *M. davidsonii* and possibly with *M. marrubioides*.
- If recognized, *M. parishii* from the city of San Bernardino (presumed extinct) has cuneate leaf bases and leaves with parallel sides.

Malacothamnus marrubioides

- Los Angeles County (possibly Kern County)
- Occasionally hybridizes with *M. orbiculatus* and possibly with *M. fasciculatus*.

Malacothamnus orbiculatus

- Los Angeles, Kern, and San Bernardino Counties
- Includes plants sometimes lumped in *M. fremontii* which only occurs north of Kern County.
- Intergrades with *M. fasciculatus* and occasionally hybridizes with *M. marrubioides*.