Chenopodium berlandieri var. boscianum

Moquin-Tandon var. boscianum (Moquin-Tandon) Wahl, PITSEED GOOSEFOOT. Annual, taprooted, 1–several-stemmed at base, erect with spreading to ascending lateral branches, in range to 190 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, having short, grayish, turgid hairs becoming powdery (farinose), not scented (mildly ill-smelling when crushed) to strongly, unpleasantly odorous (dead fishlike) even without handling. Stems: 5-angled when young aging cylindric, to 15 mm diameter, with 3 strands descending from each leaf, tough, striped with typically 10 pale yellow or pinkish to purplish red strands separated by green. Leaves: helically alternate, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole slender and low-ridged, in range 3–25 mm long, scaling with blade length, flat on upper side; blade ovate to lanceolate, typically 8–48+ × 3–20+ mm, tapered at base, entire or irregularly dentate with several teeth on margins (to 4 teeth per edge), obtuse to rounded (acute) at tip, pinnately veined having 3 principal veins at base with midrib raised on upper surface and principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface initially densely farinose becoming sparsely farinose and dull dark green, lower surface remaining farinose and gray-green. Inflorescence: spikelike panicle of helically arranged flower clusters (glomes), mostly axillary on main and ascending lateral shoots, mostly erect, terminal panicle including many ascending lateral branches in range to 400 mm long, lateral branches to 70 mm long and having secondary branches to 10 mm long, 7–15 glomes spaced or congested along axis, glome subspheroid or irregular, 3–7 mm having 3–10 sessile flowers, farinose on axes, bracts, and flowers; bract subtending lateral branch leaflike, with petiole, the blade lanceolate to ovate, to 10 mm long, entire, 1-veined at base, farinose, often early-deciduous; bract subtending glome sessile, linear, 1–6 × 0.2–< 1 mm, green and mostly farinose; bractlet subtending flower absent. Flower: bisexual or sometimes pistillate (mostly terminal flowers or late in season), radial, ± 1.2 mm across increasing in fruit, nonshowy; calyx 5-lobed, 5-sided with lobes arched inward over stamens and pistil; tube saucer-shaped; lobes subequal, obovate to oblong, 0.7–0.9 × 0.6–0.8 mm, acute to obtuse at ± hooded tip, green and thick and raised along midvein to obviously keeled, white on margins, 1-veined, farinose on outer (lower) surface, tightly incurved and later concealing developing fruit, spreading and releasing mature fruit; stamens 5, fused at base into a saucer-shaped tube ca. 0.5 mm diameter, opposite calyx tube; filaments free portion flat, tapered from base-to-tip, to 1 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.3 mm long, length < width, yellowish, with ellipsoid sacs, connected by a short connective, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish; pistil 1, 0.5–0.8 mm long; ovary superior, ± spheroid, 0.3–0.4 mm, light green, surface cobblestonelike with minute, domed cells (colliculate), 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style 2-branched, below fork 0.1–0.3 mm and greenish, the branches exserted, 0.3–0.6 mm long, stigmatic-hairy fork to tip. Fruit: achene (utricle), indehiscent with fruit wall adherent to seed when dry, horizontal, thick-lenticular, 1.1–1.5 mm diameter; seed often with a light, slightly arched streak from base to tip of radicle, sometimes yellowish or cinnamon at base of style (at separation of pericarp from seed), becoming ± honeycombed as domed cells collapse and are concave when dry on the seed coat. Seed: glossy black with minute pits in rows, rounded along rim; embryo horizontally strongly bent.

A. C. Gibson