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common name	Fiddleneck
scientific name	<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i> var. <i>intermedia</i>
family	Boraginaceae (borage)
habitat	grassland (often disturbed)
size	plant up to 3 feet tall; flower 4 to 10 mm across
fun facts	The plants can be harmful to cattle if eaten and the bristly hairs can irritate human skin.

**description** Member of the borage family. Flowers are tubular (shaped like a tube) with five petals. Flower buds are held in tight coils (spirals) at the top of the plant. The flowers open from the bottom of the plant to the top causing the stem to uncoil. The seeds are produced in fours and have small hooked spines used to hitchhike on fur or socks.

Fiddleneck is the only yellow-orange flowered member of the borage family at Mather Field. The coil of yellow-orange tubular flowers is quite **distinctive**.

**life cycle** Fiddleneck is an annual plant. It germinates in the fall and blooms during the first warm days of March. It may continue to bloom into May in favorable locations.

**ecology** Fiddleneck readily **colonizes** disturbed areas such as roadsides, plowed fire breaks and orchards. It is a very common plant in the Central Valley and foothills of California. Plants from different areas may have different leaf shapes or flower color, but are the same species.

investigate

Another member of the boraginaceae family at Mather Field is Popcorn-flower. Can you see how they are similar?

