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**common name**      Elegant Brodiaea

**scientific name**      *Brodiaea elegans*

**family**      Liliaceae (lily)

**habitat**      vernal pools, wet grassland

**size**      plant up to 1 foot tall;  
flower 4 to 5 cm across

**fun facts**      Brodiaeas are closely related to the "garden" Amaryllids. They have underground bulbs which they use to store energy.

**description**      Member of the lily family. Each flower has three petals and three sepals. In Brodiaea the sepals are colored like the petals, so that the flower appears to have six petals and no sepals. Elegant Brodiaea have purple flowers.

You can tell Elegant Brodiaea from the similar Crown Brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*) by the position of the stamenoide (white things similar to the stamens). In Elegant Brodiaea they are pressed up against the petals while in Crown Brodiaea they are pressed against the stamens. Vernal Pool Brodiaea (*Brodiaea minor*) blooms later in the year with shorter, pale blue flowers.

**life cycle**      Elegant Brodiaea is a bulb forming **perennial**. Plants produce one or two grass-like leaves early in the season. By the time the flowers are ready to bloom, the leaves have dried up and the flowers bloom in **umbels** (clusters) on a tall leafless stem. Only older plants with well developed bulbs have enough stored energy to produce flowers in May and June. Most plants do not bloom in their first 4-5 years.

**ecology**      Brodiaea bulbs are an important food source for burrowing **rodents** such as Botta's Pocket Gophers. The bulbs have a nutty flavor and Native Americans

ate them as well. Ants and California Voles collect the large nutritious seeds of the Elegant Brodiaea.

investigate Brodiaea are insect pollinated. Watch to see which insects visit the flowers.

