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common name	Filaree or Storksbill
scientific name	<i>Erodium botrys</i>
family	Geraniaceae (geranium)
habitat	grassland (often disturbed)
size	plant 4 to 36 inches tall, flower 1.5 cm across, seed up to 10 cm long
fun facts	Filaree is not native to California. Its seeds can be used to show how plant seeds can move around and plant themselves. You can also make scissors out of the seeds.

**description** Member of the geranium family. The flowers have five pink petals. Each flower produces five seeds attached to a long stalk. As the seeds dry, they detach from the stalk and coil. If they get damp again, they uncoil.

Several species of *Erodium* occur at Mather Field. Filaree is the most common and can be found in a variety of habitats.

**life cycle** Filaree 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. Sometimes it germinates in the vernal pools before they fill with water. When the pool fills, the Filaree curls up and dies within a week or so.

**ecology** Filaree can be particularly **abundant** in the first year or two after a grassland fire. That is because the blackened soil heats up from the sun more than soil with **vegetation** does. The extra heat tells all the Filaree seeds to germinate. So

right after a fire, Filaree is a dominant species. In deeper soils, the Filaree is usually replaced by invasive, non-native annual grasses within a few years.

