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common name	Red Maids
scientific name	<i>Calandrinia ciliata</i>
family	Portulacaceae (purslane)
habitat	grassland (disturbed)
size	plant with stems up to 1 foot; flower 8 to 30 mm across

- fun facts** Flowers are only open when the sun is shining. Also known as "poor man's weather vane".
- description** Member of the purslane family. The bright red-pink flowers with five petals and numerous stamens are distinctive (unlike any others). The plants are sprawling.
- life cycle** Red Maids is an annual plant. It germinates as soon as the rains begin in the fall. It can bloom as early as February or March and is generally in seed by the time the vernal pool plants begin to bloom.
- ecology** Red Maids occur in grasslands and fields. They are particularly plentiful in disturbed areas where they can be the dominant species. Red Maids were used as a pot herb by early settlers and their seeds are a favored food of doves.
- investigate** Red Maids are native, but often grow in disturbed areas. Natural disturbances can be caused by burrowing rodents or digging predators. Can you find Red Maids growing on soil which was disturbed by animals?