

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

### *Acalypha phleoides* – LINDHEIMER'S COPPERLEAF [Euphorbiaceae]

*Acalypha phleoides* Cav., LINDHEIMER'S COPPERLEAF. Perennial herb with a woody root, several-stemmed at base, not rosetted, with spreading to ascending branches, in range to 35 cm tall; monoecious; shoots with only cauline leaves, short-hairy and scattered long hairs. **Stems:** weakly ridged aging cylindric, to 5 mm diameter, tough, finally striped, with scattered straight long hairs to 2.5 mm long, short hairs arching downward in 2 broad lines descending from leaf base, surface minutely beaded with hemispheric papillae; old stem pink-tinged. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to flaring base of petiole, awl-shaped, < 2 mm long, fleshy below midpoint, short-ciliate on margins, beaded on lower surface, short-hairy with scattered long hairs; petiole scarcely channeled, pink-tinged, at top with several inconspicuous, colorless, club-shaped glandular hairs, surface minutely beaded, with arching short hairs on both side and several long hairs; blade ovate to rhombic, 18–51 × 8.5–30 mm, > petiole, truncate to cordate at base, serrate on margins, teeth regularly spaced with longer hairs at tip, pinnately veined with 5 principal veins at base, principal veins raised on both surfaces, upper surface with scattered pilose hairs and minutely dotted (crystal aggregates within blade), lower surface with arching short hairs along veins and 0–several long hairs along midrib. **Inflorescence:** mixed spike, terminal, with 30+ sessile, helically alternate pistillate flowers from base to above midpoint, the flowers ⊥ rachis, above with clusters of 10+ short-pedicillate, helically alternate staminate flowers above, upper flowers appearing pseudowhorled (glomerules) and maturing as an interrupted axis, often with ca. 2 axillary pistillate flowers at base of inflorescence developing when other fruits are nearly mature, bracteate, short-pubescent with arching hairs; bractlet subtending the lowest axillary flower leaflike with petiole; peduncle of original spike < 2 mm long increasing in fruit; bractlet subtending lower pistillate flowers leaflike, above awl-shaped, to 1.8 mm long, narrowly acuminate; bractlet subtending pedicel of staminate flower with pair of teeth, nearly colorless, with a minute point at tip; pedicel of staminate flower ca. 0.5 mm long, glabrous or with several radiating short hairs. **Staminate flower:** radial, ca. 0.7 mm across; **sepals** obscure; **petals** 4, obovate, 0.4 × 0.4 mm, often reddish; **stamens** ca. 8, fused at base into short column; filaments spreading, colorless; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, corkscrewlike with sacs separate, 0.3–0.35 mm long, white, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** absent. **Pistillate flower:** radial, to 1 mm across; **sepals** 3(–4), acuminate, 0.5–0.6 mm long, pale green; **petals** 3(–4), ovate, 0.8 × 0.4 mm, greenish aging orangish, short-ciliate on margins, persistent beneath capsule; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, 3(–4)-lobed, ca. 0.45 × 0.45 mm, yellow-green, 3(–4)-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles 3(–4), < 2 mm long increasing fruit, pale green or pale rose aging strawberry, . **Fruit:** capsule, schizocarpic as 3 mericarps, 1–2(–3)-seeded, conspicuously 3-lobed, ca. 2.3 × 3 mm, red-orange to golden brown at maturity, having hairs with fleshy bases; persistent bractlet ensheathing capsule, ascending, fan-shaped with (3)5 or 7 teeth, to 9 mm long and wide, white at base to green starting below midpoint, teeth acute, often 9-veined to principal teeth and sinuses and principal veins off-white and ± raised on back, short-ciliate on margins and surfaces with some short hairs; styles 3 scarcely fused at base, with to 12 ascending, slender stigmatic branches, 3.5–6.3 mm long, scarlet to strawberry, stigmas not papillate. **Seed:** ovoid, 1.7–1.8 × 1.3–1.4 mm, somewhat frosty gray to reddish brown, surface

pitted and darker in color; caruncle conspicuously raised, elliptic in outline,  $0.7-0.9 \times 0.35$   
 $\times 0.35$  mm, whitish.

A. C. Gibson