

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Alophia drummondii – PROPELLOR FLOWER.

Alophia drummondii (Graham) R. C. Foster, PROPELLOR FLOWER. Perennial herb, geophytic, bulb-producing, fibrous-rooted, not rosetted, 1 aerial shoot per bulb, axis forked diverging at each node 35°, suberect, in range to 50 cm tall; shoots with to 3 basal leaves and to 3 cauline leaves, basal leaves < plant height, glabrous, somewhat glaucous; bulb ovoid, to 30 × 15 mm, outer cover dark purple-red, inner layers membranous red-brown with parallel veins; adventitious roots from flat stem base of bulb. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 3 mm diameter, green and slightly glaucous. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll of axillary shoot closely 2-keeled to tip, to 20 mm long, with narrow membranous margins, colorless between keels; sheath open, overlapped (360°+) at node, indistinct from blade (ligule absent), of cauline leaves to 150 mm long, strongly folded; blade conspicuously pleated, ± narrowly lanceolate-linear, < 120–350 × 7–13 mm (flattened), long-tapered at base, minutely toothed on margins, long-acuminate at tip, parallel-veined. **Inflorescence:** cyme, in a terminal cluster of 2–5 flowers, strongly 2-dimensional, flattened side-by-side (rhipidium) with a system of alternating bractlets, bracteate, glabrous; peduncle = stem; rhipidium lanceolate in outline, to 38–43 mm long, green, each bractlet strongly folded (keeled) over inner bractlet and subtending a pedicel with the oldest 2 green forming cover, outer bractlet closed only at base and ca. 27 × 11 mm (folded) having very narrow membranous margins, glaucous, minutely toothed along fold, second bractlet open and ca. 40 × 13 mm (folded), > outer bractlet and having wider membranous margins, third bractlet open and 27+ 7–8 mm membranous with green veins, fourth and fifth bractlets membranous lacking green, lanceolate, < 27 mm long; pedicel cylindrical, at anthesis 30–45 mm long, green, glabrous, sharply bent approaching flower. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 45–52 mm across, somewhat nodding; **tepals** 6 in 2 whorls, free, widely spreading, dimorphic, outer tepals obovate, 20–27 × 17–21 mm, basal 1/3 (“claw”) translucent yellowish and colorless with irregular crimson blotches and having 11+ fine, reddish, radiating parallel veins, above purple with crimson radiating veins, wavy on purple margins, upper surface minutely papillate (domed cells), outer margins low-crenate, surfaces of basal 1/3 glossy; inner tepals cupped-broadly ovate, 16–21 × 15–18 mm (flattened) but cupped upward and appearing narrower, base of inner tepals narrower than of outer tepals, lower portion pigmented and glossy like outer tepals, next sector pinkish with crimson blotches, at midpoint with a pair of light yellow patches having some purple blotches and above purple, central portion between yellow and purple light pink purple with stalked glandular hairs producing nectar, outer margins low-crenate, acute at tip; **stamens** 3, free; filaments ca. 3 mm long, bases conic to midpoint, upper portion purple, weak, the abutted bases together appearing pyramidal; anthers not fused or adherent to style, dorsifixed, conspicuously dithecal with thick connective, 6–6.5 mm long, apricot-colored, sacs aging by bending from connective, longitudinally and outward dehiscent; pollen light orange; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, ± inversely conic 3-sided, 3-lobed, 4–5 × 2.2–2.5 mm, glossy green, with hemispheric bulge at top, 3-chambered, each chamber with 2 rows of ca. 20 light green ovules; style funnel-shaped somewhat 3-sided and 3-lobed, 7.5–8 mm long, 0.5 mm diameter at base to 1.5 mm wide at top, apricot at base and dark purple above, hollow, 6-branched at top, 3 branches each 2-forked at base, spreading and

arching from top of funnel over anthers, the branches inrolled upward so appearing hollow with whitish stigmatic tips over and among anthers. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, 3-valved, 30+-seeded, narrowly obovate to oblong 3-lobed, in range $\pm 20 \times 7$ mm, rounded on top; pedicel tough. **Seed:** subspheroid drying irregular, ca. 2.3–2.6 mm, dark brown and when attached, wide, hollow funiculus khaki-colored, minutely textured of domed cells.

A. C. Gibson