

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Amsonia ciliata T. Walter – FRINGE BLUESTAR, THREADLEAF AMSONIA [Apocynaceae]

Amsonia ciliata T. Walter (if recognized, var. *texana*), FRINGE BLUESTAR, THREADLEAF AMSONIA. Perennial herb, creeping woody rootstock, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base from ground-level short crown (caudex) at top of root, with several axillary shoots from successive nodes in canopy below inflorescent, ascending, in range to 35 cm long; shoots with only cauline leaves, foliage feathery, glabrous; latex milky, drying translucent and gummy. **Stems:** cylindric, to 3 mm diameter (green and blushed reddish) or 4 mm diameter with periderm at ground level, internodes on lower shoot to 13 mm long and in canopy having dense foliage 1–3 mm long, having projecting leaf buttresses, internodes appearing smooth but with inconspicuous blisters = hair bases with or without a minute hair. Leaves: helically alternate, simple and sessile, stipules obscure; stipules = minute bumps at base of petiole associated with minute, reddish structures appearing in axil; petiole flat on upper side, to 1.5 × 1.5 mm, greenish; blades linear and flat, (15–)30–40 × 2.5–4.3 mm along the lower stem (elliptic-linear) and 40–57 × 1–1.5 mm in canopy, entire, acute at tip, pinnately veined (lower leaves) with midrib raised on lower surface and appearing 1-veined with midrib raised on lower surface (canopy leaves), lower surface with abundant stomates. **Inflorescence:** panicle, terminal, having several ascending branchlets, each branchlet racemelike with a 1–4-flowered cyme, in flower dome-shaped with showy flowers, bracteate, essentially glabrous; peduncle stemlike, erect, to 25 mm long, aging glossy dark green or with tannish periderm; bract subtending branchlet acuminate, at the lowest node to 3 mm long decreasing upward, the lowest bract sparsely ciliate on margins and aging reddish; bractlet subtending pedicel, triangular, < 1.5 mm long; pedicel to 6 mm long, at top with enlarged receptacle. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 16–20 mm across (star-shaped corolla), faintly scented (daytime) probably strongly scented (nighttime); **calyx** 5-lobed, green, glabrous; tube cuplike, ca. 0.8 mm long lobes subequal, linear-triangular, ± 1.8–2 × 0.7 mm with 1 lobe shorter, green with narrow membranous margins and sparsely ciliate on margins, persistent; **corolla** 5-lobed; tube somewhat hourglass like expanding around ovaries at base and gradually flaring at top, 3.5–4.5 × 1 mm, white at base and streaked light violet to light violet; throat bell-shaped flared at orifice, 3.5 × 2.5 mm, greenish, with 5 ribs to sinuses, inner surface densely villous in bell around anthers and some in upper tube, exposed throat white and short-villous, orifice closed by dense hairs; lobes widely spreading, obtuse-ovate, alternately slightly overlapped at base, 7.5–9 × 3–4 mm, pale light violet and pale violet and white next to throat or white blushed pale violet, margins papillate; **stamens** 5, attached at top of corolla tube, included; filaments ascending, ± 1 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 1.3–1.5 mm long, reddish orange, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen colorless; **pistils** 2, fused at lower style, scepterlike, 5 mm long, included below dense hairs of corolla throat; ovaries hemiovoid, ca. 1 × 0.8 × 0.5 mm, green aging reddish, with flat sides facing, each ovary with ca. 15 green ovules; styles 2 at base fused above with a pair of opposite furrows, erect axis 4–4.4 × 0.4 mm and greenish aging light green (after pollination), head of pistil, just below level of anthers, ca. 1 × 1 mm, green, bumpy with a short overhanging margin 0.3 mm long at base concealing the uppermost axis, top of head with 4 stigmatic lobes indented in center, appearing viscid. **Fruits** follicles, (1–)2,

ascending, each to 15-seeded, cylindric \pm straight to slightly curved, in range 55–115 \times 3 mm, light green drying tan, not constricted between seed, acute at tip flared open from 30 mm from tip, when 2 fused $<$ 2.5 mm on inner side at base; with triangular appressed to receptacle at base of fruit. **Seed:** shaken from follicle tip, trapezoidal cylindric angled on ends, (5–)6.5–7.5(–9.5) \times (1.4–)1.8–2.2 mm, dark orangish red, in interrupted corky ridges and bumps.

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