

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Arenaria serpyllifolia var. *serpyllifolia* – THYMELEAF SANDWORT [Caryophyllaceae]

Arenaria serpyllifolia L. var. *serpyllifolia*, THYMELEAF SANDWORT. Annual, fine-taprooted, 1–several-stemmed at base, divaricately branched in upper canopy, ascending to spreading, in range to 15 cm tall; shoots somewhat wispy, puberulent. **Stems:** cylindrical, slender, 0.3–0.6 mm diameter but bulbous and ± 1 mm diameter just above each node, green aging reddish purple, internodes mostly 7–15 mm long. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, petiolate (lower leaves) and sessile with pair fused across node, without stipules; petiole hemicylindric, to 2.5 mm long, with midvein raised on lower surface, glabrous to sparsely short-hairy or margin \pm short-ciliate; blade ascending to spreading from fused bases, ovate, elliptic, obovate, or roundish, (1–)2–5.5 \times (1–)1.5–3.5 mm, tapered at base, entire and typically short-ciliate on margins, acute at tip, 3-veined or 5-veined from base and raised slightly on lower surface, lower puberulent with mostly radiating or somewhat ascending hairs. **Inflorescence:** dichasial cyme with unequal branches, terminal or axillary, bracteate, puberulent and with longer, radiating, short-glandular hairs on all green structures; bracts subtending peduncle and each fork 2, leaflike, sessile and fused across node, short-ciliate on margins; peduncle < 8 mm long, distinctly glandular hairy but not viscid. 5-veined with principal veins somewhat raised on the lower surface; most bracts upper surface glabrous or essentially so, lower surface sparsely short-hairy; pedicel to 2 mm long, puberulent and short glandular-hairy. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 5–6 mm across (calyx), dish-shaped; hypanthium short; **sepals** 5, \pm free, overlapping, acuminate-lanceolate to narrowly ovate, at anthesis 2.8–3.5 \times ± 1 mm increasing slightly in fruit, green and white-membranous on margins (wider on inner sepals), sometimes reddish purple at tip and submarginally near tip, short glandular-hairy on lower (outer surface), glandular hairs at base, faintly 3-veined with veins becoming more visible in fruit (outer sepal 1-veined); **petals** 5, short-clawed, elliptic or obovate, 1–1.4 \times 0.6–0.7 mm, white (veins obscure), obtuse at tip; **stamens** 10 in 2 whorls, free, formed on rim of hypanthium; filaments unequal, suberect and 1–1.2 mm (outer stamens) and spreading and < 1 mm (inner stamens), white, glabrous; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.25 mm long, pinkish (outer stamens) and white and often appearing sterile (inner stamens), longitudinally dehiscent; pollen colorless; **nectaries** semicircular projections at bases of outer filaments to 0.3 mm long, green, producing nectar on sepal bases; **pistil** 1, very short-stalked (stipe or gynophore); ovary superior, broadly ovoid, 0.6–0.7 \times 0.6–0.7 mm long, light green above midpoint and whitish below midpoint with 6 faint lines, glabrous, 1-chambered with 20+ ovules attached to base on a central post; styles 3, spreading, ± 0.7 mm long, translucent-white, stigmatic on inner side of styles and especially on spreading tips, conspicuously papillate. **Fruit:** capsule, loosely enclosed by glandular calyx, dehiscent at top by 6 terminal teeth, in range 12–21-seeded, before dehiscent ovoid (gourd-shaped), in range 2.2–2.9 \times 1.3–1.5 mm becoming urn-shaped with spreading teeth, maturing reddish but drying straw-colored, smooth, teeth acute and ± 0.6 mm long; seeds long-stalked (funiculus) on central postlike placenta; fruit stipe inconspicuous; calyx in range \geq immature and dehiscent fruit. **Seed:** sowbuglike with strongly curved embryo, in range 0.45–0.55 \times 0.4–0.45 mm, brown and not shiny with each cell minutely papillate and papillae blackish.

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