

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Arisaema dracontium – GREEN DRAGON, DRAGONROOT [Araceae]

Arisaema dracontium (L.) Schott, GREEN DRAGON, DRAGONROOT. Perennial herb, corm-bearing, fibrous-rooted on corm, not rosetted, with several plantlets arising from principal corm, erect to suberect, in range to 65 cm tall; monoecious; shoot with a single basal leaf. a large leaf arising from corm with a shorter, ascending inflorescence, the inflorescence appearing to arise from the leaf petiole but actually arising from the corm surrounded by the closed sheath of the leaf, glabrous (hairs absent on entire plants); corm (mature corm not examined) ca. 10 cm belowground, subspheroid, young corm of small vegetative shoot conic-ovoid, $> 10 \times 10$ mm, white, solid, having 1+ domed axillary buds below midpoint, \pm covered by a thin, papery, colorless, belowground, ensheathing leaf with acute tip (prophyll?) with parallel veins. **Stems:** absent. **Leaves:** aboveground solitary, deeply palmately divided 3-forked at base with a central leaflet and a pair of spreading rachislike axes with leaflets successively formed on outside side in a radial array like a bird's foot (pedate), in range with 5–13 leaflets (leafletlike lobes), long-petiolate with sheath (petiole derived with sheath from lower leaf zone), without stipules; petiole-sheath closed and cylindrical, 5–10 mm diameter approaching blade, belowground white aging darker, aboveground green, smooth; petiolules poorly defined to absent, margin at sinus somewhat raised; blades of leaflets (leafletlike lobes) elliptic or ovate to obovate, in range < 70 – $205 \times < 25$ – 70 mm, the widest usually the central leaflet, tapered at base, subentire and often wavy on margins, acuminate to acute with short point at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins sunken on upper surface and especially the midrib raised on lower surface, glabrous blade tissue easily wilted. **Inflorescence:** spikelike (spadix), on peduncle shorter than midplant, flowers enclosed by a conspicuous bract (spathe), of unisexual flowers, rachis bearing only staminate flowers or either pistillate flower forming a broad basal band below staminate flowers or basal band interrupted with alternating strips of pistillate and staminate flowers, flowers helically alternate showing conspicuous contact parastichies except at the top, pistillate flowers to 80 tightly packed and sessile on lower portion approaching midpoint, staminate flowers to 150 and stalked, on 15 mm of rachis spaced along contact parastichies, rachis with a long-exserted sterile extension; peduncle passing through a tear-shaped opening in leaf sheath ca. 25 mm long, cylindrical, 5–6 mm diameter but flaring approaching spathe and somewhat glaucous; spathe open but margins touching at base, in range to 95 mm long, light yellowish green, erect and sheathlike to midpoint then slightly indented on margins with a drooping upper portion (resembling jack-in-the-pulpit), upper portion ovate, to 40 – 50×30 – 38 mm, outer surface of sheath somewhat glaucous; rachis ca. 3 mm diameter, pale green but tissue white sometimes pale green base with minute red specks, above staminate flowers exserted portion tail-like (caudate) and wavelike, to 230 mm long, light green, lower portion somewhat compressed side-to-side; “pedicel” of the most basal staminate flowers (including filament tissue) narrowly conic to 1.5 mm long decreasing upward to 0.5 mm and more stout, white. **Pistillate flower:** 3–4 mm across; **perianth** absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, broadly obovoid mutually compressed (to 6-sided), ca. 1.5×3.5 – 4 mm, glossy light yellow-green, smooth, 1-chambered with several ovules; style absent; stigma papillate, ca. 0.3 mm across, colorless. **Staminate flower:** 1 mm across; **perianth** absent; **stamens** 2, appearing sessile at top of “pedicel” and ascending; anthers basifixed, dithecal, 0.4–0.6 mm long, whitish to

pale green, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** absent. **Fruit:** (not observed) berry, 1–3-seeded, oblong to pear-shaped, 7–13 × 10–13 mm, glossy orange-red or scarlet, not sunken into rachis. **Seed:** 3–5 mm long.

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