

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Berchemia scandens – ALABAMA SUPPLEJACK

Berchemia scandens (Hill) K. Koch, ALABAMA SUPPLEJACK. Woody climber, scandent (lacks tendrils) and twining, deciduous, growing on shrubs and small trees; shoots with only cauline leaves mostly with leaves on shoot 2-dimensional (plagiotropic), foliage blades thin, vegetative and reproductive structures lacking hairs. **Stems:** twigs with projecting, peglike leaf bases, green, with smooth internodes; old stems often resting on ground, woody, to 25 mm diameter, olive green, tough and flexible. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, appearing fused at base and free above midpoint, attached to persistent leaf base, fleshy, triangular (side view) and together 2-keeled, $1.3\text{--}1.5 \times 0.5 \times 0.5$ mm, pale green aging red from tip backward, margins appressed to stem minutely ciliate, pairs of stipules soon elevated from stem by emergence of a glaucous, lanceoloid axillary bud; petiole scarcely channeled \pm flattish on upper side, to 16 mm long; blade broadly elliptic or ovate to oblong-oval (ovate-broadly elliptic), in range $20\text{--}90 \times 16\text{--}44$ mm, broadly tapered to rounded (subcordate) at base, subentire to remotely low-crenate on margins (appearing wavy), obtuse to broadly acute with short point at tip, conspicuously pinnately veined with parallel lateral veins spaced evenly 4–5 mm and \pm parallel secondary veins bridging lateral veins, principal veins sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, upper surface sometimes appearing striped green and lighter green, principal veins strongly curved when reaching margin. **Inflorescence:** paniclelike, terminal on lateral shoots, several–20-flowered, mostly with cymelike cluster of 3 flowers per node, bracteate, glabrous; bractlet subtending pedicel minute, early-deciduous; pedicel cylindrical, at anthesis 2–3 mm long, light green and somewhat glaucous. **Flower:** appearing bisexual (functionally unisexual?), radial, \pm 2.5 mm across; bud conspicuously 5-angled; hypanthium subtending fleshy disc and ovary base, disclike, ca. 1 mm long, light green; **sepals** 5, at anthesis suberect, deltate, ca. 1.1 mm, light green, with midridge on upper surface; **petals** 5, upright and hoodlike inward each cupping and concealing a stamen, \pm 1 mm long (broadly ovate when flattened), whitish, notched at top; **stamens** 5, free, opposite petals; filaments at pollination slightly exerted from hoodlike petal tapered from base to tip, ca. 1.3 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal exerted from petal at pollination, 0.7–0.8 mm long, cream-colored, longitudinally dehiscent inward; pollen white; **nectary disc** flattened ringlike, ring 0.5–0.6 mm wide, outer edge scalloped with 10 shallow lobes, inner opening (gap) around style sharply pentagonal, raised slightly around base of ovary; **pistil** 1, ca. 0.7 mm long, flared at ovary base; ovary superior, 2-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style fingerlike projecting from nectary disc, style and terminal stigma light green. **Fruit:** none observed in range, drupe, with 1–2 stones, oblong-ellipsoid, $5\text{--}8 \times 4$ mm, bluish black and glaucous.
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