

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Cerastium brachypodum* – SHORT-STALKED MOUSE-EARED CHICKWEED [Caryophyllaceae]

*Cerastium brachypodum* (A. Gray) B. L. Robins., SHORT-STALKED MOUSE-EARED CHICKWEED. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, 1(–several)-stemmed at base, unbranched or occasionally forked below the repeatedly branched inflorescence, spreading or weakly ascending, in range to 20 cm tall; shoots of only cauline leaves, pairs of leaves widely spaced along stem, pilose and short-pilose on vegetative plants changing to stalked glandular-hairy on green surfaces in inflorescence, not viscous. **Stems:** cylindric, to 2 mm diameter, often red-purple, pilose with hairs to 2 mm long. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple and sessile, without stipules; blade obovate to ovate, to 35 × 12 mm, petiolelike at base folded upward from midrib, entire, rounded to broadly acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, pilose and short-pilose. **Inflorescence:** dichasial cyme, terminal on principal shoot and lateral branch, cyme to 15-flowered, having flowers with or without petals (late-formed cleistogamous flowers), bracteate, glandular-hairy; bracts subtending dichasial cyme 2 and opposite, sessile and fused across node, ovate, to 6.5 × 2 mm, decreasing upward, with stalked glandular hairs, axes green, glandular-hairy; bractlet subtending pedicel ovate, ca. 1.5 mm long; pedicel at anthesis to 2 mm long increasing to 2× in fruit and somewhat deflexed or arching, glandular-hairy. **Chasmogamous flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 4 mm across; **sepals** 5, helically alternate in outer and inner series, ovate, 2.5–3 × 1–1.2 mm increasing to 3.7–4.5 mm long in fruit, the outermost green, the next with 1 membranous margin, the innermost with 2 membranous margins, having evenly spaced, erect, stalked glandular hairs on green tissue (none exceeding sepal tip), persistent; **petals** 5, 2-lobed, in range ca. 3.5 × 1 mm, white, lobes triangular and ca. 0.8 mm long, glabrous, shriveled next to base of fruit; **stamens** 10, free, persistent between sepals and base of fruit; filaments 1–1.5 mm long, translucent; anthers dorsifixed, conspicuously dithecal, 0.25 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, ca. 1 × 0.7 mm, pale light green, glabrous, subtruncate at tip, 1-chambered with many ovules attached to central post (free-central placentation); styles 5, ascending, to 0.5 mm long, white, conspicuously papillate above midpoint. **Cleistogamous flower:** bisexual, radial, < 1 mm across; **sepals** 5, helically alternate in outer and inner series, not spreading, ovate, ca. 2.5 × 1–1.2 mm increasing slightly in fruit, the outermost green, the next with 1 membranous margin, the innermost with 2 membranous margins, having evenly spaced, erect, stalked glandular hairs on green tissue (none exceeding sepal tip), persistent; **petals** absent; **stamens** 5, free, with anthers touching stigmas, persistent between sepals and base of fruit; filaments ca. 1 mm long, translucent; anthers dorsifixed, conspicuously dithecal, 0.25 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, ca. 1 × 0.7 mm, pale light green, glabrous, subtruncate at tip, 1-chambered with many ovules attached to central post (free-central placentation); styles 5, ascending, 0.4–0.5 mm long, white, conspicuously papillate above midpoint. **Fruit:** capsule, many-seeded, dehiscent by 10 teeth at top, before dehiscing 6.5–8 × 1.7 mm, after dehiscing cylindric mostly slightly curved upward and scarious, teeth with minute, outrolled margins (conduplicate), with seeds congested below midpoint concealed by persistent calyx. Seed: