

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Clematis texensis – SCARLET CLEMATIS, RED LEATHERFLOWER [Ranunculaceae]

Clematis texensis Buckl., SCARLET CLEMATIS, RED LEATHERFLOWER. Perennial climber woody at base, dieback and deciduous, twining and with tendrils, clammering over neighboring shrubs; shoots with only cauline, pinnately compound leaves, leaves widely spaced and variously oriented, “leathery,” appearing glabrous but initially with ephemeral soft hairs; tendril = terminal leaflet or leaflets modified as axis. **Stems:** somewhat 6-sided and inconspicuously 12-ridged, on new growth to 3.5 mm diameter but widely flaring where leaves fused across node, internodes to 190 mm long, tough, green often tinged purple-red on upper side, where flared below leaf having a pair of depressions. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, odd-1-pinnately compound with (3–)4(–5) pairs of lateral leaflets and the terminal leaflet (axis) modified as a tendril or sometimes 1–2 adjacent leaflets also modified as tendrils, petiolate, without stipules; petiole channeled, to 55 mm long, flared at base, glaucous in channel; rachis with a pair of ridges on upper side bearing leaflet, tough, appearing segmented with pairs of leaflets widely spaced along rachis; petiolule somewhat enlarged at base but not a pulvinus, pulvinuslike at top of petiolule next to blade, to 40 mm long, swelling often sparsely hairy; blades of leaflets broadly ovate or somewhat kidney-shaped to inversely heart-shaped or mitten-shaped with 1–2 basal lobes, $< 25\text{--}55 \times < 35\text{--}65$ mm, occasionally having a petiolulate lower lobe (secondary leaflet), cordate to subtruncate (rounded) at base, entire or with inconspicuous deltate teeth on margins, mostly rounded with folded-acuminate point at tip, pinnately veined with 3 veined at base but forming an elaborate vein network and principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface \pm glaucous, lower surface low-cobblestonelike (verrucose) with patches minutely textured, glabrous or with several hairs. **Inflorescence:** cyme, terminal on axillary shoot, 1–several-flowered (7), 2 cymes per node but 1 cyme developing earlier, bracteate; stem axis ascending, cylindric, to 50×3 mm, tough, often purple-red on exposed side; bracts subtending peduncle (pedicel) 2 and opposite, leaflike, petiolate, and fused across node, petiole deeply channeled and to 10 mm long, blade broadly ovate, to 60×40 mm, truncate at base, entire and unlobed; peduncle cylindric enlarged at base, to 170×1.5 mm, tough, purple-red on exposed side, glaucous at base, at flowering peduncle and pedicel strongly curved downward approaching flower; bractlet subtending flower cupped-ovate to broadly ovate with acuminate tip, to $4.5 \times 2.5\text{--}3.5$ mm, light green, appressed to 1/2 of very young bud, abscising very early by bud growth. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, before anthesis nodding, ca. 22×17 mm, bud slightly depressed subtruncate at base, with 8 broad, low ribs; receptacle with pistils (torus) hemispheric, 1.5×3 mm, green, with short hairs between ovaries; nectaries absent; **sepals** 4, calyx appearing urn-shaped, free but adhering by short-tomentose hairs on adjacent inner margins, gaping at anthesis forming recurved tip later separating downward, \pm triangular, ca. 19×9.5 mm but opposite pairs of slightly different lengths, scarlet, thick, of spongy tissue, outer surface glabrous, inner surface white-tomentose and densely so approaching tip, abscising in developing fruit; **petals** absent; **stamens** 30–40 in 3 series, helically alternate, free, included, lacking staminodes; filaments decurrent, narrowly curved, ca. $8 \times 2\text{--}3$ mm, white at base and greenish, villous; anthers basifixed, dithecal, ± 7 mm long including fingerlike extensions of connectives 0.5–0.7 mm long, whitish with greenish connective, having short hairs along connective,

longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistils** ca. 30, helically alternate on elevated torus, included, 8.5–11 mm long, densely silky-hairy; ovaries superior, 2.5 × 0.4 mm, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style to 9 mm long, indistinct from ovary, whitish, strigose aging short-strigose. **Fruits:** achenes, to 30 in headlike cluster terminal on long pedicel, each achene with a long, feathery beak (persistent style); achene indehiscent, 1-seeded, ± ovate in outline compressed side-to-side and depressed seed chamber (faces) but biconvex over seed, 7.5–10 × 5–6 × 2 mm, light brown to brown, ± strigose on faces with strongly appressed fine hairs; beak looped to whiplike or curved to twisted (never straight), 27–34 mm long, purplish brown to brown, densely pilose with ascending to spreading, golden, straight hairs 2–3+ mm long.

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