

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Croton capitatus var. *lindheimeri* – WOOLLY CROTON, HOGWORT [Euphorbiaceae]

Croton capitatus Michx. var. *lindheimeri* (Engelm. & A. Gray) Muell.-Arg., WOOLLY CROTON, HOGWORT. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, 1-stemmed at base, with ascending and spreading branches, in range to 105 cm tall; monoecious; shoots with only cauline leaves, foliage grayish to gray-green (early cauline leaves) from reflective hairs, initially velveteen aging bristly, densely tomentose with stalked stellate hairs, inconspicuously glandular-hair, stellate hairs white with to 10, subequal ascending arms mostly on cylindrical stalks, stalks often aging reddish, glandular hairs minute, sessile, spheric, colorless and barely discernable beneath other hairs, strongly odorous. **Stems:** appearing cylindrical (irregularly angled), to 7 mm diameter, appearing tannish with dense cover of stellate hairs; internodes \pm hollow. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached at base of petiole, linear and slender, 3–4 mm long, with stellate hairs; petiole shallowly channeled, of lower caulines on initial shoot to 80 mm long, decreasing upward, appearing tannish and densely stellate pubescence; blade, ovate, $< 44\text{--}95 \times < 22\text{--}50$ mm, subcordate, entire, acute, 3-veined at base and pinnately veined with principal veins sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** raceme, terminal on canopy shoots, with 3–6 pistillate at base and 15+ staminate flowers above, flowers helically alternate, bracteate, densely stellate-hairy with stalked stellate hairs and inconspicuous glandular hairs; bract subtending peduncle = diminutive leaf; peduncle short below the lowest flower; rachis during flowering to 25 mm long, densely stellate-hairy; bractlet subtending pedicel linear and stipulelike, to 6 mm long, pale orangish or greenish at base, stellate-hairy; pedicel < 3 mm long. **Staminate flower:** radial, ca. 3 mm across; receptacle with ascending, long-stalked stellate hairs **calyx** 5-lobed, densely stellate-hairy on outer (lower) surface; tube dishlike, to 0.8 mm long, green; lobes deltate, 1 mm, membranous; **petals** 5, ovate, to 1.5 mm long, white with green midvein, ciliate on margins, narrowly acute; **stamens** (7–)12(–14), free; filaments compressed front-to-back, 1.2–1.5 mm long, white, long-ciliate on margins; anthers basifixed, dithecal, 0.75–0.8 mm long, light yellow-green, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** absent. **Pistillate flower:** radial, 8 mm across including hairs (with ascending calyx) or 12 mm across (with calyx fully flattened); **calyx** 7–8-lobed + 1–2 vestigial lobes; tube dishlike, ca. 0.3 mm long increasing to 0.5–0.7 mm long in fruit; lobes typically ascending with tips bending inward, narrowly oblong, $3.8\text{--}4.3 \times 0.6\text{--}0.8$ mm + widely spreading stellate hairs (obscuring width), slightly wider at base, with hairs on both surfaces, at 1 or 3 sinuses having a structure unlike lobes, 1 usually slender, 0.4–0.5 mm long, with hairs along axis, if 2 present (calyx 7-lobed) diminutive lobes linear and to 1.5 mm long; **nectaries** 3–4, fused to calyx tube and the lowermost lobe of adjacent lobes and absent on other half of calyx, flat with nipplelike tip; **petals** absent; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary 3-lobed, ca. 1.3×1.5 mm + densely covered with stellate hairs obscuring size and shape of ovary, with inconspicuous glandular hairs, 3-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles 3, ca. 2 mm long, 2–3 \times 2-forked below midpoint, forming 12 or 18 stigmatic branches, stellate-hairy below stigmas, style bases green, the branches exerted, initially ascending later spreading, fingerlike, ca. 1.5 mm long, aging reddish and papillate above midpoint. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, 3-seeded, schizocarpic by dehiscent along septa and splitting from central axis into 3 segments, 3-lobed, ca. 5 mm across, densely covered with stellate hairs.

Seed: with fleshy appendage (caruncle), ovoid to hemi-spheroid, ca. $4 \times 3.5 \times 3$ mm (+ caruncle), light brown but with outlines of cells in rows or low ridges from top above midseed, rounded on back, with 2 faces somewhat flattened or appearing as 1 face with shallow groove to hilum, obtuse-angled on side of hilum just below tip; caruncle inversely heart-shaped, 1–1.8 mm, white.

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