

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Cuscuta exaltata* – TREE DODDER [Convolvulaceae/Cuscutaceae]

*Cuscuta exaltata* Engelm., TREE DODDER. Perennial parasitic vine, twining, attached to host stem and its own stem internodes by haustoria; shoots essentially leafless, light green to yellowish green (not lacking chlorophyll), glabrous. **Stems:** rough often twisting with low, dissected ridges, to 4 mm diameter, green often with scattered purple-red spots or small blotches, easily broken having a weak woody cylinder; pith solid; haustoria broad. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade infrequent, cupped awl-shaped, 2–2.4 mm long. **Inflorescence:** raceme or panicle with racemelike axes, axillary, 3–< 20-flowered, to 50 mm long, bracteate, glabrous; bract subtending panicle or branchlet sessile and cupped boat-shaped, 1.6–2 mm long; axes with pulvinuslike swelling at base on upper side, axes not cylindrical, with helically alternate bractlets, when condensed appearing like 1–2 bracts with each flower; bractlet subtending flower appressed later widely spreading, boat-shaped, 1.6–2 mm long; pedicel short to 4.5 mm long (having several bracts along axis). **Flower:** bisexual, radial,  $\pm$  3 mm across; **sepals** 5–6, in 2 overlapping series, obtuse cupped-rounded, ca. 2.2 mm (flattened), colorless aging greenish at thick center at base, appressed in flower and fruit, not papillate but outer surfaces somewhat warty (tuberculate); **corolla** 5–6-lobed, ca/ 3.5 mm long, white, not fleshy; tube + throat bell-shaped, not papillate; lobes initially spreading later ascending at top of developing fruit, obtuse-obovate to ovate, 1.2–1.5  $\times$  1 mm, white, overlapping, with convex cells on upper surface, inner surface with a set of appendages opposite base of stamens (infrastaminal scales), the appendages arising from top of corolla tube winglike along decurrent filament 2-lobed, the lobes acute ca. 0.5 mm long lacking conspicuous hairlike fringes; outer surface never papillate; **stamens** 5–6, decurrent on corolla throat and arising at sinuses between corolla lobes above corolla appendages; filaments erect, 0.3–0.4 mm long, not papillate, swollen at anther attachment; anthers slightly exerted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.5 mm long, orangish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **nectary disc** not observed; **pistil** 1, 1.8–2 mm long, included below level of anthers; ovary superior, shallowly 2-lobed at top depressed between lobes, ca. 0.8  $\times$  1.3 mm, light green, small, 1-chambered with one functional ovules; styles 2 fused nearly to stigmas, rising from within depression, erect, somewhat compressed side-to-side, white + stigmas, stigma capitate, 0.2–0.25 mm wide. **Fruit:** capsule, circumscissile around base, thin-walled, 1-seeded (tight within capsule), obovoid-oblong, 6.5–8  $\times$  4.5–5 mm + dry, persistent style at top. **Seed:** broadly ovoid to inversely top-shaped, 4.5–5  $\times$  4–4.5  $\times$  3.5–4 mm, green drying light brown, lower side somewhat truncate.

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