

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Cuscuta cuspidata* – CUSP DODDER, CUSPIDATE DODDER [Convolvulaceae]

*Cuscuta cuspidata* Engelm., CUSP DODDER, CUSPIDATE DODDER. Annual parasitic vine, twining, flexible-stemmed, attached to host stem by haustoria; shoots essentially leafless, light orange (lacking chlorophyll), glabrous. **Stems:** threadlike and cylindric, 0.3–0.35 mm diameter, fleshy, light orange (greenish), smooth but becoming knobby where haustoria initiate. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade appressed, awl-shaped, to 2 mm long, rounded on back. **Inflorescence:** paniclelike condensed cymes, axillary, each cyme 2–many-flowered, bracteate, glabrous; cyme axes initially pale light green; bract subtending branchlet and bractlet subtending pedicel awl-shaped often keeled above midpoint, 1.5–2 mm long, white or greenish at base, cupped, acute at tip; pedicel at anthesis 0.4–1.5 mm long increasing to 2 mm in fruit; bracteoles subtending flower 2. cupped-ovate, ca. 1.3 × 1.3 mm, white. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 4 mm across (spreading corolla lobes) and 2 mm across (reflexed corolla lobes), receptacle pale green; **calyx** of 5 sepals essentially free at base, appressed to corolla and resembling bractlet and bracteoles, overlapping at base, cupped-ovate to cupped-elliptic, 1.5–1.7 × 1.5 mm, whitish, somewhat wavy on margins, lacking veins and papillae; **corolla** 5-lobed, ± 2.7 mm long, white lacking veins, with 5 appendages attached below midpoint; tube + throat bell-shaped, in range ca. 1.9 mm diameter; lobes spreading aging reflexed, acute-triangular, ca. 1.6 × 0.9 mm, not papillate, the appendages at anthesis ⊥ to tube bent inward and hiding ovary, membranous, wedge-shaped in outline and conspicuously fringed (fingerlike), ± 0.5 × 0.3 mm, white-translucent; **stamens** 5, fused to end of tube alternate with corolla lobes (just beneath sinuses), attached above corolla appendage; filaments erect, flattened on outer side, 0.8–1 mm long, white; anthers exserted, dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.6–0.7 mm long, orange, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow-orange; **nectary disc** weakly defined surrounding basal 1/4 of ovary, green aging orangish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, barrel-shaped aging spheroid, ca. 0.7 mm long, green aging pale green above midpoint, 2-chambered, each chamber with 2 yellow-green ovules; styles 2, in depression at top of ovary, suberect and somewhat divergent, unequal, ca. 2.5 mm and 3.1–3.2 mm long, white; stigmas positioned at different heights with 1 at top of anthers and the other at base of anthers, capitate, 0.3–0.4 mm diameter, orange. **Fruit:** berrylike capsule, in range (1–)2–4-seeded, papery and not dehiscent regularly, subspheroid, ca. 2 mm; calyx scarious, cupped around fruit. **Seed:** mostly 3-sided (2-sided if 2-seeded) with rounded outer face and flattish lateral faces, ca. 1.5 × 1 mm, dull orange-brown, rounded along edge.

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