

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Dalea tenuis – STANFIELD PRAIRIE-CLOVER [Fabaceae]

Dalea tenuis (Coulter) Shinnery, STANFIELD PRAIRIE-CLOVER. Perennial herb, several-many-stemmed at base, initially long shoots forming lateral branch at each leafy node, with terminal inflorescences to 30 cm tall; shoots with feathery cauline leaves clustered within 20 mm of principal stem, foliage gland-dotted on lower surfaces, aromatic when crushed, essentially glabrous except leaf bases and stipules. **Stems:** ± cylindric, to 1.5 mm diameter, tough, striped green or with red. **Leaves:** helically alternate, pinnately 3-foliolate, petiolate with pulvinus, with stipules; stipules 2, fused to base of petiole (below pulvinus), acuminate, 0.8–3 mm long, mostly red above base with short hairs or fringed on outer margin and the decurrent leaf base; petiole < 6–13 mm long, pulvinus < 1 mm long, above pulvinus channeled, slender, light green; petiolules canoelike, 0.6–1 mm long, pale green; rachis channeled, < 4 mm long; blades of leaflets linear, < 5–15 × 0.5–1 mm, entire, prow-shaped with short point at tip, 1-veined, folded upward from midrib (inrolled), upper surface glaucous, lower surface dark green and somewhat glossy, minutely gland-dotted. **Inflorescence:** headlike spike, terminal on long peduncle, many-flowered, before anthesis conic, with spreading flowers ca. 15 mm wide and in young fruit (7–)8–9(–10) mm wide, bracteate, densely soft-hairy; peduncle cylindric, to 100 mm long, 1 mm diameter, tough, flexible, sometimes striped purplish red, glabrous; axis densely soft-hairy; bractlet subtending flower clasping calyx, boat-shaped with tail-like tip and somewhat keeled, 3–3.5 mm long, tough, red-brown with green triangle at base, soft short-ciliate to midpoint and fringed above and glandular hairy along tip, soft-hairy on back where not exposed, persistent in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, ca. 10 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, overall angular-obovoid, 2.5–3 mm long, green; tube somewhat 3-sided and compressed by adjacent flowers and bractlets, ca. 2 × 2 mm, white with exposed surface green, having 3 hairy ridges to sinuses of upper lobes, densely soft-hairy (sericeous) with downward-pointing hairs; upper 2 lobes deltate, 1.3–1.5 mm wide, lower 3 lobes ovate, 0.8–1 mm wide, green, with upward-pointing hairs above midpoint; **petals** 5, banner free, wings and keel petal fused to stamens alternating with free filaments, clawed, light pink-purple; banner claw ca. 3 mm long, white but light pink-purple approaching limb; limb inversely heart-shaped, 2 × 2–2.2 mm, cupped outward; wings ovate with short claw but limb asymmetric at base (hastate) larger toward banner, 3 × 1.2–1.3 mm, minutely bumpy on upper margin; keel petals 2, oblong-lanceolate with short claw, 3 × 1.1–1.3 mm, obtuse to broadly acute at tip; **stamens** 5, monadelphous (5 fused as a sheet), sheet at top having 5 exerted filaments alternating with 4 exerted petals (2 wings + 2 keel petals, sometimes interpreted as staminodes); filament sheet open with ovary bulging out on upper side, 3 mm long, white, 9-ribbed; free filaments spreading, 4.5–5 mm long, pink-purple but paler next to sheet; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 1–1.1 mm long, bright yellow to orange-yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **nectary** tissue at base of ovary, nectar-producing, nectar thin; **pistil** 1, 9–10 mm long; ovary superior, ovoid compressed side-to-side but more enlarged to upper side, ca. 1.5 × 0.8 mm, white with some green, mostly glabrous with erect hairs near top, having inconspicuous glands on faces, 1-chambered with 2 ovules attached to upper side; style bent ca. 1.5 mm from base, white, having hairs to bend; stigma terminal. **Fruit:** pod (legume), indehiscent and shed within calyx and scarious with

filament sheet, 1-seeded, hatchet-shaped constricted around seed above midpoint, 2.5–3 × 1.5 mm, brown around seed and tannish and blotchy below midpoint. **Seed:** ca. 1 × 1 mm, dark brown but difficult to separate from fruit wall.

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