

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Erigeron bonariensis – LITTLE HORSEWEED [Asteraceae]

Erigeron bonariensis L. (syn. *Conyza bonariensis*), LITTLE HORSEWEED. Annual, taprooted, ± rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, typically principal axes unbranched and straight below inflorescence, erect (to ascending), 20–120 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, leafy throughout, commonly with tufts of leaves from unexpanded axillary shoots, grayish green, ± densely short-hirsute and long-pubescent or strigose, with scattered, longer hairs having swollen bases. **Stems:** cylindric, to 8 mm diameter, with 1 conspicuous ridge and 2 faint lateral ones (fusing to midridge) descending from each leaf, greenish striped with yellow-green to tannish white or orangey tan veins. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile to indistinctly petiolate, without stipules; petiole (basal leaves) weakly distinguished from tapered leaf base; blade oblanceolate or elliptic (lower leaves) to lanceolate or linear (upper leaves and tufted leaves on axillary shoots), 10–110 × 1–8 mm, tapered at base but flared at point of attachment, entire to obscurely toothed, acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib inconspicuously raised on upper surface and raised on lower surface, arched-strigose with also scattered longer hairs having swollen bases, the swollen bases becoming conspicuous and whitish on older leaf margins and along the midrib on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal, open, paniclelike arrays, never with lower branches overtopping main axis, array 35–200+ × 15–70 mm, several–many branched from primary rachis, head ± discoid (radiant), 3.5–4 mm across, in range with 100–150+ pistillate peripheral flowers in several series and 6–15 bisexual central flowers, bracteate, short-hairy but with scattered long hairs; bract subtending lateral branch leaflike; lateral branches with ascending cymelike clusters of several–many heads; bract subtending peduncle leaflike, reduced upward; peduncle 10–30 mm long, low-ridged, short-strigose and often with some longer hairs, having several linear-lanceolate bracts (= future bracts subtending peduncles); **involucre** bell-shaped to urn-shaped, 3.5–5 × 3.5–4 mm becoming wider in fruit, phyllaries 27–35 in 2–3 graded series, unequal, lanceolate to narrowly triangular, 1.5–5 × 0.3–0.7 mm, the shortest phyllaries in outer series, green with translucent midvein, narrowly white-membranous on margins, fringed at acute tip, ascending-pubescent along midvein, strongly reflexed in fruit; receptacle flat, 2–4 mm diameter, without bractlets (paleae), slightly stalked and often with persistent, hairlike fragment of vascular tissue at tip of stalk. **Peripheral flower:** pistillate, radial, < 0.2 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** of 17–21 capillary bristles in 1 whorl, fine, 3–3.7 mm long, white aging tawny; **corolla** 3-lobed, 3–3.7 mm long; tube cylindric, pale yellow-green; lobes erect, unequal, narrowly triangular, to 0.25 mm long, white (sometimes aging reddish at tip); **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, oblanceoloid to ellipsoid compressed side-to-side, 1–1.2 mm long, finely short-hairy, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style included or partially exerted, 3–4 mm long, white, 2-branched, the branches spreading, to 0.9 mm long. **Central flower:** bisexual, radial, ± 0.4 mm across, 3.5–4 mm long; **calyx (pappus)** of 17–21 capillary bristles in 1 whorl, fine, 3–3.7 mm long, white aging tawny; **corolla** 5-lobed, 3.2–3.3 mm long; tube + throat cylindric, tube pale yellow to pale yellow-green, throat pale yellow; lobes acute, ± 0.25 mm long, yellow and thicker with marginal vein, outer surface short-strigose; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla at top of tube, included; filaments threadlike, 0.8–0.9 mm long; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, basifixed,

dithecal, ± 0.7 mm long, bright yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen bright yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, trapezoid compressed side-to-side, < 0.5 mm long, finely short-strigose, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style included, ± 2.5 mm long, 2-branched, the branches 0.25 mm long, acute at tip. **Fruits:** cypselae, monomorphic, with spheroid array of tawny pappus 9–11 mm diameter; cypselae oblong to oblanceoloid, 1.2–1.5 mm long, pale tan to light gray-brown, sparsely and finely sericeous on faces; pappus of 17–21 tawny, ascending, fine capillary bristles, 3–3.7 mm long.

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