

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Erigeron tenuis – SLENDER FLEABANE [Asteraceae]

Erigeron tenuis Torrey & A. Gray, SLENDER FLEABANE. Short-lived perennial (biennial), in range caudex and fibrous-rooted or also with taproot, rosetted, in early growth several-stemmed at base and later with many shoots arising from caudex, in range to 35 cm tall; gynomonoeocious; shoots with basal leaves (mostly absent at flowering) and cauline leaves, conspicuously short-strigose with raised bases, lacking glandular hairs. **Stems:** 5-sided and ridged, to 2 mm diameter, with 3 ridges descending from each leaf, green, lower stem with ridges or also tissues aging purple-red, conspicuously short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, short-petiolate and sessile (petiole indistinct), without stipules; petiole of lower leaves slender and flattened top-to-bottom, indistinct from blade, of cauline leaves to 0.5 mm long, pale green; blade of early leaves obovate to oblanceolate pinnately divided with several lobes or teeth, long-tapered at base, later in growing system slender and often entire, $< 10\text{--}25 \times 1\text{--}2$ mm, acute at tip, 1-veined with midrib sometimes slightly raised on lower surface, often folded upward from midrib, short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs. **Inflorescence:** heads, terminal in open, cymelike arrays of several heads, head radiate, mostly 8–14 mm across, of ca. 70 pistillate ray flowers and many bisexual disc flowers, bracteate; peduncle low-ridged, short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs, with hollow internodes; **involucre** hemispheroid to short bell-shaped, ca. 4.5×5 mm, short-hirsute, phyllaries 30–40, outer series of 8 phyllaries ca. 2 mm long, green, inner phyllaries in 2–3 series, oblong to oblanceolate, ca. $3\text{--}3.4 \times 0.35\text{--}0.5$ mm, membranous with raised green center having short-hirsute hairs, minutely fringed on acute to acuminate tip; receptacle convex, lacking bractlets (paleae), with minute axis for each ovary, glabrous. **Ray flower:** bilateral, 0.5 mm across (corolla limb); **calyx (pappus)** in 2 series, outer whorl of ca. 15 stiff, slender, scarios, minute scales, ascending, 0.10–0.3 mm long, inner series of 12–15 erect capillary bristles alternating with scales, 1.7–1.8 mm long, colorless; **corolla** unlobed to minutely 1-notched; tube flattened front-to-back, ca. 1.2×0.2 mm, colorless and inconspicuously 5-veined, lacking hairs; limb widely spreading, oblanceolate-linear, ca. $3.5\text{--}4 \times 0.35\text{--}0.5$ mm, white with purplish red strip on outer (lower) surface, never coiled; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1, included; ovary inferior, oblong-elliptic (compressed), ca. $1.2 \times 0.25\text{--}0.3$ mm, translucent having white callous at base, with ascending short hairs, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; **nectary disc** surrounding base of style, 0.1 mm long, white; style tips scarcely exposed at corolla orifice, < 1.5 mm long, 2-branched at midpoint, colorless below fork, the branches stigmatic, 0.6 mm long, white. **Disc flower:** radial, ca. 0.5 mm across (ovary), ca. 3 mm long; **calyx (pappus)** in 2 series, outer whorl of ca. 15 stiff, slender, scarios, minute scales, ascending, 0.10–0.3 mm long, inner series of 12–15 erect capillary bristles alternating with scales, 1.9–2.2 mm long, colorless; **corolla** 5-lobed, 2–2.5 mm long; tube ca. 0.5 mm long, colorless, 5-veined, not expanded around nectary disc, throat 5-ribbed, colorless, lacking hairs; lobes triangular, ca. 0.35 mm long, yellow and papillate on inner (upper) surface; **stamens** 5, attached to top of corolla tube, \pm included (appendages of anthers); filaments threadlike, 0.7–0.8 mm, yellowish; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, basifixed, dithecal, 1–1.2 mm long including colorless acuminate appendages, sacs light orange, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light orange; **pistil** 1, ca. 2.5 mm long; ovary inferior,

oblong-elliptic (compressed), ca. 1.2×0.25 – 0.3 mm, translucent having white callous at base, with ascending short hairs, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; **nectary disc** surrounding base of style, ± 0.15 mm long, white, thin nectar in corolla tube; style included, 1.3 – 1.5 mm long, 2-branched, colorless below fork, the branches stigmatic and appressed, ca. 0.3 mm long, yellow. **Fruits:** cypselae (achenes) monomorphic with some pappus differences; cypselae 2-ribbed (2-veined) compressed top-shaped, 1 – 1.2×0.6 mm, pale gray, truncate at top, sparsely short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs, with straight short hairs at base; pappus of ray and disc flowers having series of ca. 15 minute, slender scales (setae) 0.1 – 0.3 mm long and inner series of ca. 15 capillary bristles 1.7 – 1.8 mm long (ray flowers) and 1.9 – 2.2 mm long (disc flowers) aging straw-colored; receptacle convex and appearing pitted with remnant of ovary attachment; involucre widely spreading in fruit (not reflexed).
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