

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

### *Euphorbia prostrata* – PROSTRATE SANDMAT [Euphorbiaceae]

*Euphorbia prostrata* Aiton, PROSTRATE SANDMAT. Annual, taprooted, several–many-stemmed at base, mat-forming, branches diverging at 20–30°, prostrate, not rooting at nodes, typically < 2 cm tall; monoecious; shoots strongly 2-dimensional (plagiotropic), pubescent; latex white, copious. **Stems:** cylindric and sometimes with low ridges, < 2.5 mm diameter, flexible, green soon turning pinkish brown except on unexposed surfaces, principal stems not zigzagged, nodes swollen, internodes typically 5–25 mm long but shorter at plant base. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, short-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2 (4 per node), attached to node, free on upper side, on lower side pair fused across node, acuminate, < 1 mm long, the upper one > lower one, white to pink, fringed and ciliate on margins; petiole 1–1.5 mm long, curved to orient leaves horizontally; blade broadly ovate or heart-shaped to oblong or roundish, 4–9 × 2.5–6.5 mm, oblique at base, short-serrate and sometimes reddish on margins, obtuse to rounded at tip, inconspicuously pinnately veined with 3 veins at base, pubescent, upper surface gray-green, lower surface lighter in color. **Inflorescence:** cyathium (= involucre with staminate flowers and 1 pistillate flower), axillary, produced in leafy, cymelike arrays; peduncle < 0.5 mm long; cyathium to 0.7 mm wide (including spreading glands and appendages); **involucre** inversely conic, < 1 mm long, green, pubescent approaching top, with 5 bracts and 4 glands, the bracts of involucre fused most of length, acute at green tips with whitish margins, the glands alternate with bracts (1 absent), nectar-producing, raised, elliptic to roundish, ± 0.2 mm long, fleshy, reddish, channeled in center, appendaged from just below gland, the appendage petal-like, < gland, whitish to pale pinkish, entire or weakly scalloped on outer margin; staminate flowers 2–4(–5), never in clusters, each with pedicel-like stalk, each flower associated with a bractlet; bractlet threadlike ± 0.5 mm long, white, not fringed, the pedicel short; pistillate flower on a pedicel-like stalk (gynophore), at anthesis gynophore short and erect with only styles exposed, soon after gynophore elongating and becoming recurved with maturing ovary exerted. **Staminate flower:** reduced to 1 stamen; filaments < 0.2 mm; anthers conspicuously dithecal, each sac spheroid, ± 0.2 mm long, reddish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow. **Pistillate flower:** reduced to 1 pistil; ovary superior, 3-lobed broadly ovoid, ± 0.5 mm, light green with or without pink to reddish edges, pilose with most hairs along edges, 3-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; styles 3, < 0.3 mm long, 2-branched above midpoint, the branches club- to sausage-shaped, fleshy, pinkish below and ± colorless to transparent pink at tip; stigmas minute. **Fruit:** capsule, 3-seeded, 3-lobed, broadly triangular-ovoid, 1.5 mm long, pilose, elastically dehiscent along septa and chambers into 6 dry valves (some valve-pairs remaining attached at base) and expelling seeds. **Seed:** quadrangular-ovoid, 1–1.2 mm long, orangy brown beneath frosty-white epidermis aging grayish green, transversely wrinkled, not noticeably grooved on obtuse, lower ridge.

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