

**Vascular Plants of Williamson County**  
*Houstonia subviscosa* – NODDING BLUET [Rubiaceae]

*Houstonia subviscosa* (A. Gray) A. Gray, NODDING BLUET. Annual, slender-taprooted, wispy, 1-stemmed at base, not rosetted, branches forking at nodes and  $\pm$  spreading, 3– < 20 cm tall; shoots with only tiny cauline leaves, stiff-puberulent. **Stems:**  $\pm$  4-sided and narrowly 4-ridged, to 0.5 mm diameter, internodes < 20 mm long, with pulvinus at base of each basal internode, aging reddish and ridges colorless. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, subsessile, with stipules fusing across nodes; stipules papery, between leaves at node (interpetiolar), triangular in outline; petiole slender, to 1 mm long; blade linear, 6–13  $\times$  < 1 mm, entire, acute at tip, 1-veined with midrib raised on lower surface, sparsely puberulent. **Inflorescence:** flower solitary at node, axillary to 1 leaf, stiff-puberulent; pedicel short increasing 2–3 $\times$  in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual,  $\pm$  radial, ca. 1.5 mm across; **sepals** 4, 2 on sides and 2 on ends, triangular, erect, 1.1–1.3 mm long, green with colorless midridge, with numerous stiff, short hairs; **corolla** 4-lobed, white; tube cylindrical, 1  $\times$  0.4 mm, outer surface glabrous, inner surface with several short hairs below anthers; lobes spreading, ovate,  $\pm$  0.7 mm long; **stamens** 4, attached on corolla tube ca. 0.4 mm below sinuses; filaments erect, 0.3–0.35 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, short-exserted, 0.35 mm long, cream, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, inconspicuously 2-lobed, green, 2-chambered, each chamber with several ovules; style short-exserted, ca. 1.8 mm long, white, 2-branched 0.25–0.3 mm from tip, thick-cylindrical 0.2 mm diameter at base, the branches stigmatic, at level of anthers, appressed in bud later spreading and aging reddish. **Fruit:** capsule, 2-lobed dehiscent lengthwise on top,  $\pm$  12-seeded, ca. 3  $\times$  1.5  $\times$  1.5 mm, seeds on surface of green fleshy placentae; sepals connected by weak ledges. **Seed:** limpetlike, 0.85–1 mm long, purplish red, minutely rough, on concave side with longitudinal ridge (raised embryo axis) and cupped wings.  
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