

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Lemna aequinoctialis* – LESSER DUCKWEED [Araceae/Lemnaceae]

*Lemna aequinoctialis* Welw., LESSER DUCKWEED. Perennial herb, floating aquatic, clonal via fragmentation forming dense colonies, fibrous-rooted, tightly rosetted, of 1–5, coherent, highly reduced, helically alternate, horizontal shoots (fronds), with a mother frond producing new daughter fronds successively in 2 lateral pouches (daughter fronds initiated on different days and always unequal), the daughter fronds eventually break free to become mother fronds; frond = stem (basal portion) + leaf, highly modified, with 2 pouches, each pouch along edge next to base of frond and containing a deep-seated shoot tip to produce either a daughter frond (an inflorescence), buoyant with internal air chambers, upper surface waxy and ± nonwetable, glabrous; adventitious root 1 per frond, to 40 mm long (observed in range), sheathed at tip and without root hairs, initially colorless aging greenish on young portion, with a visible vascular core. **Stem (stipe):** connecting daughter frond from pouch at base of mother frond, minute, white. **Frond:** at maturity obovate in outline (base of frond narrow at apical meristem), when fully expanded (3–)4–5(–6) × (1.8–)2.5–3(–3.5) mm, green often senescing colorless, low bi-convex, entire, obtuse at tip, 3-veined (easily viewed in fresh material), upper surface glossy green, mostly smooth often with minute conic papillae along midline; pouches open to midfrond, to 2.3 mm long, opening narrowly lens-shaped in face view, with membranous margins on lips, the lips appressed to emerging frond or gaping when chamber empty (frond released); lower surface appearing netlike with visible air spaces < 0.3 mm long, not blisterlike, when dried revealing minute white flecks (crystal clusters = raphides). **Inflorescence:** in range not observed.

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