

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Lemna obscura* – LITTLE DUCKWEED [Araceae/Lemnaceae]

*Lemna obscura* (Austin) Daubs, LITTLE DUCKWEED. Perennial herb, floating aquatic, clonal via fragmentation forming dense colonies, fibrous-rooted, tightly rosetted, of (1–)2–5, 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 on lower surface (ventral) conspicuously red to purple-red (anthocyanin) fading to green on the larger mother frond, daughter fronds eventually break free to become mother fronds (typically breaking free before a 6<sup>th</sup> frond is visible); 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  $\pm$  nonwetable, glabrous; adventitious root 1 per frond, to 25 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) but approximately circular in outline while growing, when fully expanded 2–3  $\times$  1.5–2.2 mm, anthocyanin pigment visible in ventral cell walls, low bi-convex, entire, rounded at tip and obtuse at base, 3-veined but often difficult to observe, upper surface green, with several minute conic papillae along midline but a dominant papilla closest to the frond apex; pouches open to midfrond, to 1.5 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. **Inflorescence:** in range not observed.

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