

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Lepidium austrinum – SOUTHERN PEPPERWEED [Brassicaceae]

Lepidium austrinum Small, SOUTHERN PEPPERWEED. Annual, taprooted, initially rosetted, 1-stemmed at base, initially unbranched with diverging lateral branches in canopy, aging with lateral branches nearly to base, erect, in range 7–50 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, all leaves petiolate, hirsute, to 1.5 mm long. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 3 mm diameter, straight, internodes to 25 mm long, hirsute hairs " radiating. **Leaves:** helically alternate, pinnately lobed to serrate, petiolate, without stipules; petiole channeled, to 25 mm long (pinnately lobed leaves) decreasing upward; blade to 60 mm long, oblanceolate in outline, of lobed leaves with to 8 alternate, spreading lateral lobes, terminal lobe > lateral lobes, unlobed leaves oblanceolate or obovate to elliptic or lanceolate, < 15–40 × 4–15 mm, thin, serrate on margins, pinnately veined with principal veins slightly raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** raceme or panicle of racemes, terminal, many-flowered, flat-topped and ca. 4 mm across at top, flowers helically alternate, mostly lacking bracts; peduncle to 5 mm long; bract subtending raceme leaflike, oblanceolate-linear, subsessile, to 10 × 1 mm, entire or with small tooth on margin, acute at tip, 1-veined raised on lower surface, short-hairs on lower surface and along margin to midblade; rachis somewhat ridge, ridge descending from each pedicel, with short arched hairs; pedicel ascending, cylindrical, ca. 2 mm long, with short arched hairs on upper side. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 1 mm across; **sepals** 4, dimorphic, 1 opposite on flat sides of ovary, cupped-ovate, pair opposite edges of ovary cupped over edges of ovary, 0.7–0.95 mm long, green with membranous margins, inner sepal sometimes with several hairs; **petals** 4, spatulate to obovate, 0.6–0.9 × 0.35–0.4 mm, < sepals, white; **stamens** 2, free, opposite flat sides of ovary at septum; filaments erect, 1 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ± 0.25 mm, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, flattened ⊥ septum, roundish and slightly notched at top, ca. 1 × 1.1 mm, green, short-ciliate along edges with arched hairs, often with some short hairs on faces to midpoint, 2-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; stigma terminal, subsessile in notch at top, notch 0.2–0.5 mm deep, stigma domelike, 0.2–0.25 mm diameter, colorless, papillate. **Fruit:** siliqua (silicle), dehiscent by 2 valved, 2-seeded, broadly elliptic with notch at tip, in range 2.4–3.2 × 1.8–2.1 mm, not veiny with a midline (septum), notch to 0.5 mm deep, with seeds attached at the top to an elliptic, translucent septum; not beaked; pedicel in fruit cylindrical. Seed: compressed-elliptic with folded embryo evident, in range ± 1.5 × 0.8 mm, dull cinnamon brown, gelatinous when wetted.

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