

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Lepidium virginicum subsp. *virginicum* – POOR MAN'S PEPPER [Brassicaceae]

Lepidium virginicum L. subsp. *virginicum*, POOR MAN'S PEPPER. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, with ascending branches, erect, in range 12–35 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, basal leaves absent at flowering and puberulent with unbranched arching hairs. **Stems:** cylindric, to 2 mm diameter at base, sparsely puberulent. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, appearing sessile, without stipules; blade of lower leaves oblanceolate to narrowly obovate, 10–40 × 2–8 mm, of most cauline leaves linear to oblanceolate-linear, to 25 × < 1–2 mm, long-tapered at base, lower leaves with 1-several teeth, or with 2 teeth and 2 lobes below midpoint and 2 teeth above midpoint, the 2 lobes and upper 2 teeth often opposite, of most cauline leaves entire, broadly acute to obtuse at tip, the largest leaves faintly pinnately veined with midrib slightly raised on lower surface, the narrow blades 1-veined, dull, lower leaves sparsely puberulent, upper leaves glabrous or with widely spaced hairs on margins. **Inflorescence:** raceme, terminal, many-flowered, with open flowers level overtopping buds and developing fruits never overtopping buds, lacking bracts, glabrous or essentially so on axes; bract subtending peduncle leaflike, linear, to 15 mm long, entire; peduncle cylindric, 15–35 mm long, green; bractlet subtending a lower pedicel (rare), leaflike; pedicel at anthesis sharply ascending, cylindric, 1.5–2 mm long increasing to 2× and spreading in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, in range 0.8–1 mm across; **sepals** 4, cupped-ovate to ± elliptic, 0.6–0.8 mm long, yellowish green with white margins and tip, a pair appressed to ovary edges, the other pair cupping stamens on flat face of ovary, deciduous but the 2 along immature fruit edges tardily so; **petals** 4, narrowly oblanceolate, ca. 0.5–0.6 × 0.15–0.2 mm, white; **stamens** 2, free; filaments erect, ca. 0.6 mm long, white; anthers basifixed, dithecal, 0.3–0.35 mm long, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **nectaries** 4, = a pair at the base of each stamen, minute, translucent yellowish green; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, circular in outline and flattened, ± 0.8 mm, minutely notched at tip, compressed ⊥ to septum, 2-chambered with 1 ovule per chamber; style 0.1 mm long, included in notch on ovary; stigma at level of ovary tip, 0.15 mm across, colorless and densely papillate. **Fruit:** siliqua (silicle), dehiscent by 2 valves, 2-seeded, circular with notch at tip, in range 2.5–3 mm, somewhat glossy and green, ± flat to slightly concave on upper surface and slightly convex on the lower surface, with a conspicuous midline (septum), notch to 0.5 mm deep and vertical, with seeds attached at the top to an elliptic, translucent septum, not veiny, glabrous, before drying with minutely domed myrosin cells; not beaked; pedicel in fruit cylindric, to 0.2 mm diameter. **Seed:** compressed-ovoid with folded embryo evident, in range ca. 1.5 × 1 mm, dull pale greenish yellow to light orange or cinnamon brown; very gelatinous when wetted.

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