

**Vascular Plants of Williamson County**  
*Leptopus phyllanthoides* – MAIDENBUSH [Euphorbiaceae]

*Leptopus phyllanthoides* (Nutt.) G. L. Webst., MAIDENBUSH. Shrub, deciduous, rhizomatous, with ascending to arching twigs and branches, to 75 cm tall; monoecious (occasionally plant only staminate during a particular spring); shoots often ± planar (plagiotropic), sparsely short-villous or appearing glabrate. **Stems:** herbaceous stems inconspicuously several-ridged, < 2 mm diameter, with ridges not descending from a nearby leaf, pale green; woody stem with gray bark. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, short-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to stem at base of petiole, narrowly triangular, 1–2 mm long, papery, reddish, short-ciliate, somewhat persistent; petiole channeled, < 2 mm long, bent to orient blade; blade broadly elliptic or roundish to obovate, (4–)10–27 × (2.3–)5–21 mm, subcordate at base, entire to subentire on margins, ± rounded with minute point at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface green with paler veins, glabrous, lower surface with some short hairs mostly near the base. **Inflorescence:** leafy raceme having axillary cymes of 1–2 unisexual flowers, second flowers delayed until first flower matures; bract subtending cyme or bractlet subtending pedicel of solitary flower leaflike; pedicel of staminate flower 13–15 × 0.15 mm, of pistillate flower 8–9 mm long increasing 2× in fruit, yellow-green. **Staminate flower:** radial, dishlike, 4.5–5 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed (or 5 sepals), ± dishlike (rotate) and 2.5 mm long; tube green, glabrous; lobes ± elliptic-ovate, 1.7–2 × 1.1–1.3 mm, yellowish green with paler margins, rounded at tip, 3-veined, with several short hairs on lower surface; **petals** 5, obovate, 1.5–1.7 × 1 mm, colorless with pale green midvein and margins; **nectary disc** 10-lobed, 2–2.2 mm diameter, yellow-green, margin minutely crenate; **stamens** 5, free, alternate with petals; filaments flared at base tapered to tip and flattened front-to-back, 1.3–1.5 mm long, pale yellow-orange; anthers dithecal, nodding, 0.4–0.45 mm long, light yellow-orange aging reddish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow-orange; **pistil** sterile, ca. 1.2 mm long, 3-forked, pale yellow-orange aging greenish. **Pistillate flower:** radial, at anthesis 3 mm across, bell-shaped with ascending sepals; **sepals** 5, obtuse-obovate, 3–3.3 × 1.9–2.1 mm, yellow-green with narrow membranous margins, 5-veined from base, somewhat short-ciliate above midpoint, lower surface with some short hairs (also on adjacent receptacle); **petals** 5, obovate, 0.6–0.8 × 0.4 mm, orangish; **stamens** absent; **nectary disc** crownlike surrounding base of ovary, ± 10-lobed, yellow-orange, 0.7–0.9 mm wide; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, 6-lobed, 1.1–1.2 × 1.5 mm, yellow-green but purple-red on upper side, glabrous, 3-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules; styles 3, each 2-forked at midpoint and branches strongly recurved, to 1.3 mm long; stigmas (3)5, terminal, slightly lobed, papillate. **Fruit:** schizocarpic capsule, loculicidal and septicidal, 3-lobed oblate, 4–4.3 × 7–7.5 mm, glabrous; after breaking apart with persistent central axis to 2.5 mm long on fruit base and subtended by persistent perianth. **Seed:** 3-sided with 2 flat sides and rounded on back, ca. 3 × 2.5 mm long, dull tan; hilum on inner edge near top.

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