

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Lespedeza virginica – SLENDER LESPEDEZA, SLENDER BUSHCLOVER [Fabaceae]

Lespedeza virginica L., SLENDER LESPEDEZA, SLENDER BUSH CLOVER. Perennial herb, taprooted from woody caudex, 1–several-stemmed at base, to 35 cm tall; shoots with cauline leaves, short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs; caudex with many young shoot buds. **Stems:** initially 8-ridged aging cylindric, to 6 mm at plant base, internodes to 10 mm long, with conspicuous vertical lenticels, old stem brittle, red-rown, and without hairs. **Leaves:** helically alternate, pinnately 3-foliolate, petiolate with pulvinus, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to leaf base below pulvinus, awl-shaped, 1–2.5 mm long, red, with raised midvein on lower surface, short-strigose, late-deciduous; petiole pulvinus ca. 1 mm long, with upward-pointing hairs, tinged reddish, petiole channeled above pulvinus, < 2–6 mm long; rachis channeled, < 2 mm long; stipels absent; petiolules pulvinuslike, 0.6–0.9 mm long, densely short-hairy; blades of leaflets \pm narrowly elliptic to narrowly oblong, (3–)7–15(–25) \times 1.5–4(–5) mm, somewhat folded upward from midrib, \pm rounded at base, entire, obtuse to rounded with short point at tip (= extension of midrib), pinnately veined with principal veins sunken on upper surface and conspicuous and midrib raised on lower surface, lower surface with scattered glandular dots. **Inflorescence:** raceme, axillary, with 1 or 2 types of flowers with cleistogamous flowers at base and upper flowers chasmogamous or mixed, flowers paired at nodes, bracteate, short-strigose; bracts at base of raceme 2, \pm triangular, 0.5 mm long, green or tinged reddish, sometimes keeled, short-strigose; bractlets subtending pair of flowers 2–3, lanceolate, ca. 0.5 mm long, green, short-strigose; pedicel of chasmogamous flowers short, with 2 subopposite bracteoles subtending calyx, awl-shaped, ca. 1.5 mm long, green, short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs. **Chasmogamous flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 1.5–4 mm across (banner); **calyx** 5-lobed, 3.2–4.4 mm long, short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs; tube bell-shaped somewhat compressed side-to-side, 1.3–1.8 mm long, green; lower lobes 3, acuminate, > tube, having raised midvein to each tip, upper limb closely 2-forked approaching tip, purplish or purple with tannish; **petals** 5, clawed; banner obovate, claw ca. 1 mm long, greenish, limb 5–5.5 \times 4 mm with a pair of inrolled basal lobes 1 mm long, lower portion greenish, upper portion pink-purple above lobes with a set of 10+ red-purple, radially oriented spots; wings 2, 5.5–6 mm long, claws to 2 mm long, whitish to greenish, limbs locked with keel, oblong with basal lobe, ca. 4 \times 1.5 mm, yellowish white with pinkish above midpoint; keel of 2 petals fused ca. 1.5 mm on lower edges of limbs to tip, claws 2 mm long, whitish to greenish, lobes yellowish white at base to light reddish purple approaching tip, notched at tip, glabrous; **stamens** 10 (9 fused + 1 free), \pm 4 mm long; filaments free portion curved upward, 0.8–1.1 mm long; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.25–0.3 mm long, light orange-yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light orange-yellow; **pistil** 1, 5–5.5 mm long, green, short-stalked (stipe), the stipe channeled and glabrous; ovary superior, narrowly ovoid, ca. 2 \times 0.7 mm, densely covered with stiff, short white hairs, 1-chambered with 1 green ovule attached to upper side; style curved upward with some hairs to midpoint, stigma capitate. **Cleistogamous flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 1 mm across; **calyx** short-lobed, to 3.5 mm long; tube to midpoint; **petals** lacking claws, to 3.5 mm long; purplish red to reddish purple, darker than in chasmogamous flower;

stamens 10 (9 fused + 1 free), to 2.5 mm long; filament free portion 0.4–0.7 mm long, light green; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ca. 0.25 mm long, greenish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen orangish; **pistil** 1, to 2 mm long, green, lacking stalk (stipe); ovary superior, narrowly ovoid, 1-chambered with 1 green ovule attached to upper side; style somewhat hooked approaching tip, stigma capitate. **Fruit:** pod (legume), short-stalked or sessile, indehiscent, 1-seeded, ovoid to broadly ellipsoid, ca. 6 × 3.5 mm, slightly inflated by seed, with raised veins, short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs; style (beak) persistent, narrow, upper portion curved to hooked; calyx and orangish bracteole persistent. **Seed:** oval in outline compressed side-to-side, ca. 2.5 × 2 × 0.7 mm, olive to brown.

A. C. Gibson