

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Linum medium var. *texanum*— SUCKER FLAX, STIFF YELLOW FLAX [Linaceae]

Linum medium (Planch.) Britt. var. *texanum* (Planch.) Fern., SUCKER FLAX, STIFF YELLOW FLAX. Perennial herb (appearing annual), sparsely leafy, taprooted, mostly 1-stemmed at base, with ascending to suberect, in range 25–70 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves ascending to suberect somewhat appressed to stem, glabrous, not glaucous. **Stems:** initially finely and mostly faintly ridged, < 1–2 mm diameter (annual shoots), with 3 ridges descending from each leaf, tough and often stiff, internodes uneven, to 7 mm long; solid; lower stem often lacking periderm; root with light brown periderm. **Leaves:** helically alternate + opposite (the lowest nodes on principal shoots), simple, sessile, without stipules (lacking glandular stipules); blade ascending to suberect, acuminate-lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, in range 6–20 × < 1–3 mm, entire, often short-pointed at tip, 3-veined at base with midrib slightly sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** panicle of racemelike cymes, terminal, open, on small plant flowering canopy restricted to upper 25%, on the largest individuals often with several ascending branches at midplant and terminal inflorescence to 140 × 140 mm, with ascending, helically alternate primary branches, many-flowered on slender axes, bracteate but not obviously leafy, glabrous; bract subtending principal branch leaflike but diminutive, often 3–4 × ± 0.8 mm, not persistent; primary branch axis lacking flowers on lower portion with first node 7–30 mm from base, unequally forked at each node with short-stalked flower and continuing axis, axis finely ridged descending from each bract midvein, later at fork often forming a new branchlet axillary to bractlet; bractlet at each fork on side opposite pedicel; pedicel at anthesis < 1.5 mm long increasing 2–3× in fruit, having a conspicuous abscission constriction 1 mm below fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, in range 8–10 mm across, glabrous, open and dishlike in morning, petals readily abscising when stressed; **sepals** 5, helically alternate with 3 outer sepals overlapping 2 inner sepals, slightly unequal with outer sepals > inner sepals, acute-ovate, 2–2.5 mm long (of 1 flower), firmly attached to receptacle, while open ascending and appressed to corolla later erect, overlapping below midpoint, green with colorless windows below midpoint, 3-veined and with midvein raised on lower (outer) surface, outer sepals entire, inner sepals with conspicuously glandular teeth on margins; **petals** 5, spreading, attached to base of short stamen tube, twisted in bud with overlapping limbs, not clawed, easily dislodged at narrow base, lacking hairs at base; broadly fan-shaped and truncate or shallowly notched at top, in range 4.5–5 × 3 mm, delicate, light yellow, finely and faintly palmately veined (e.g., 11-veined), not jagged on margin, light yellow; **stamens** 5, fused at their bases forming a ringlike tube around ovary base, with anthers at level of stigmas; ring ca. 0.2 mm long, greenish, lacking teeth (vestigial staminodes) between filaments; filaments ca. 2 mm long, flared-triangular and greenish at base and threadlike and light yellow above; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.7–0.8 mm long, dull red, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **nectaries** 5, fused to stamen tube opposite filament bases; **pistil** 1, < 3 mm long; ovary superior, obovoid, ± 0.75 × 0.6 mm, green, 5-chambered becoming falsely 10-chambered by growth of false septa, with 2 ovules per chamber; styles 5, free to base, ascending, conspicuously papillate, pale yellow, subequal, 1.7–2.1 mm long; stigmas terminal. **Fruit:** capsule, schizocarpic, septicial, 10-seeded, breaking tardily into 10 crescent-shaped, 1-seeded indehiscent

segments, depressed spheroid (slightly wider between midpoint), $\pm 2 \times 2.5$ mm with length < width, lacking beak, purple on exposed surfaces and green opposite appressed sepals; segments wedgelike 3-sided rounded on back and flat on lateral faces, $2 \times 1 \times 0.6$ mm, thick-walled on back, glabrous. **Seed:** \pm ovate in outline compressed side-to-side, 1.5 mm long, light brown to light reddish brown.

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