

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Loeflingia squarrosa – SPREADING LOEFLINGIA [Caryophyllaceae]

Loeflingia squarrosa Nutt., SPREADING LOEFLINGIA. Annual, slender-taprooted, 1-stemmed at base but 1–several cm above with stems radiating in all directions, branches repeatedly and unequally forked, dense mat-forming (large individuals), prostrate (short-erect), in range to 5 cm tall; shoots and inflorescence (= most of plant) glandular-hairy but not resinous or viscid to touch, the glandular hairs colorless. **Stems:** cylindrical, slightly swollen or not just above each node, 0.8–1.2 mm wide at internode midpoint, conspicuously swollen at lower nodes to 1.6 mm diameter, pale green, internodes < 11 mm long, densely glandular-hairy with radiating hairs. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, sessile and pair fused across node by membranous sheath, sheath continuing as colorless wings on lower blade + persistent and not splitting, with stipules; stipules 2 = each a terminal hair (seta) 0.4–0.6 mm long on each wing; blade spreading to recurved, linear and cylindrical above winged base, 2.5–7 × 0.4–0.8 mm, ± fleshy, wings at base 2 mm long, entire, spine-tipped, the spine to 0.25 mm long and colorless. **Inflorescence:** appearing like solitary, axillary flowers but = a leafy dichasial cyme with forked stems of unequal diameters diverging beneath each sessile flower, bracteate, glandular-hairy; bracts 2 per node, spreading to recurved, equal, leaflike. **Flower:** resembling a tuft of green leaves, bisexual, radial, 4–6 mm across with spreading outer sepals; cleistogamous; **sepals** 5, unequal and helically arranged, the outer 2 sepals arching or becoming recurved, the inner sepals ascending, narrowly lanceolate, 3.5–6 × ± 1 mm within each flower, green, spine-tipped, glandular short-villous, often cylindrical above midpoint, narrowly membranous and with 2 hairs (stipulelike setae) on basal margins; **petals** absent; **stamens** 3 or 5, free; filaments ± 0.5 mm long, pale green or colorless; anthers basifixed, dithecal, ± 0.2 mm long, yellowish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish; **pistil** 1, obscurely stalked; ovary superior, 3-sided ovoid, ± 1 mm long, yellowish green, 1-chambered with ca. 25 ovules attached to central, basal post; style minute and 3-branched, stigmatic on inner face and smooth on outer sides of branches. **Fruit:** capsule, dehiscent by 3 valves at tip, in range several–12-seeded, compressed-lanceoloid, 0.5–0.8 × length of inner sepals, the straw-colored valves recurved at tip, seeds attached to basal post. **Seed:** narrowly ovoid, 0.4–0.6 mm long, tannish blushed reddish brown along 1 side, minutely papillate along grooved edge.

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