

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

### *Lygodesmia texana* – TEXAS SKELETONPLANT [Asteraceae]

*Lygodesmia texana* (Torrey & A. Gray) Greene, TEXAS SKELETONPLANT. Perennial herb, taprooted (rhizomatous), rosetted, 1-stemmed at base, forming lateral branches from canopy downward, in range 30–65 cm tall; shoots with to 7 basal leaves and several cauline leaves, mature shoot with green stems and sparse foliage, glabrous; latex milky; taproot to 5 mm diameter. **Stems:** cylindric to slightly ridged, to 5 mm diameter, tough, green. **Leaves:** helically alternate, sparsely pinnately lobed with short, slender, and widely spaced lobes, short-petiolate, without stipules; petiole flared at base, flat, colorless at base, indistinct from blade; blade 140–190 mm long (basal and lower cauline leaves), axis flattened, to 2.5 mm wide, lobes acute to acuminate, to 5 mm wide, upper cauline leaves decreasing upward to < 10 mm long, papillate along colorless margins.

**Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal cymelike array of several heads, head ligulate, ca. 40 mm across, with 5–12 bisexual flowers, bracteate; axis stemlike, green, glabrous; bract subtending peduncle triangular, to 2.5 mm long, short-ciliate on margins and purplish at tip with finlike projection near tip; peduncle slightly ridged and stemlike, 5–15 mm long, with several helically alternate bracts along axis, bract short awl-shaped, < 1.5 mm long, short-ciliate on margins, with a projecting whitish, persistent base, with bracts at top subtending involucre (calyculus), bracts 8–16, deltate grading upward to acute-ovate and acuminate-ovate, 1.5–5 mm long, to 1.8 mm wide, the larger bracts with raised midridge, bracts with a subterminal, purplish, finlike projection, pale green to midpoint and darker above or some reddish to purplish approaching tip, green tissue glabrous or puberulent on sides of backbone, densely short-ciliate and jagged on membranous margins; **involucre** cylindric, 5–6 mm wide, of 8 phyllaries in 1 series, phyllaries linear, 19–22 × 1.7–3 mm, gray-green center dugout canoelike with membranous margins base-to-tip to 0.9 mm wide, having 3 raised ridges, the ridges often pink to purplish, outer (lower) surface conspicuously puberulent except membranous margins, with a subterminal, purple, finlike projection at convergence of 3 veins, tip membranous and short-ciliate; receptacle with ovaries in short pits, lacking bractlets (paleae), glabrous. **Ligulate flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 5–6 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** capillary bristles (not smooth), 100–150+ in 3 series, 7.5–14(–16.5) mm long, white, fused to green ring at base, not feathery (plumose), persistent; **corolla** 5-lobed, 35–40 mm long; tube cylindric, 12–13 mm long, 0.4 mm diameter at base 1.3–1.5 mm diameter at top, white or with red lines; limb 5-lobed (toothed), expanded portion strap-shaped, to 20 × 5–6 mm, lavender, teeth triangular, 1.5–2 mm long; **stamens** 5, arising at top of corolla tube; filaments ca. 2.5 mm long, white, glabrous; anthers fused into cylinder surrounding style, basifixed, dithecal, 5–6.7 mm long + slender acuminate tails ca. 0.8 mm long, colorless with reddish stripes, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, narrowly barrel-shaped, 2 × 0.8–1 mm, green to paler at base or greenish to white at base, smooth, glabrous but some minute glandular hairs at top, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style long-exserted from anthers (to 8 mm), < 25–30 mm long, white with exserted portion pink-purple, 2-branched, below midpoint glabrous, sparsely papillate-hairy within anthers, densely hairy with ascending hairs on exserted portion, the branches stigmatic, 2 mm long, and exserted above tips of anthers. **Fruits:** cypselae (achenes), cylindric, 12–14 × 1.5 mm, the widest near or

somewhat below midpoint, tan, indented at base, puberulent; beak absent; pappus of 100–200 spreading capillary bristles in 2–3 series, 7.5–14(–16.5) mm long, white, not plumose.

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