

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Malvastrum coromandelianum – THREE-LOBED FALSE MALLOW [Malvaceae]

Malvastrum coromandelianum (L.) Garcke, THREE-LOBED FALSE MALLOW. Perennial herb or annual, taprooted, not rosetted, several-stemmed at base, branches spreading to ascending, forming a new axillary shoot at node with a mature fruit, in range 20–60 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves but at flowering with only cauline leaves, having 2-armed to 4-armed stellate hairs with arms appressed and principally 180° apart. **Stems:** cylindric, to 6 mm diameter, tough. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to flaring base of petiole, acuminate narrowly lanceolate, 5–7 × 0.8–1.1 mm, entire and stiff-ciliate on margins with 1-armed hairs, lower surface with some stellate hairs, persistent; petiole cylindric, 8–22 mm long; blade ovate to ovate-triangular, 13–53 × 12–40 mm, truncate to broadly tapered, serrate on margins, acute to obtuse at tip, pinnately veined with midrib sunken on upper surface and principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface with widely spaced stellate hairs; lower surface with hairs especially densely along veins. **Inflorescence:** solitary axillary flower, initially buds densely clustered at shoot tip ± flat-topped with unexpanded subtending leaf (bractlet), bracteate, with appressed stellate hairs having 2–4 arms; pedicel cylindric, at anthesis 1.5–2 mm long, densely stellate-hairy; bracteoles 3 attached to lower side of receptacle and surface of calyx to pedicel (epicalyx) opposite 3 sinuses, lanceolate to narrowly elliptic to narrowly oblanceolate, 5–6 × 1 mm, green. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 16–18 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, at anthesis ca. 7 mm long increasing to 9 mm long in fruit, green, with appressed stellate hairs on outer (lower) surface and glabrous inner (upper) surface; tube broadly funnel-shaped enlarging and hemispheroid in fruit; lobes ± deltate and somewhat pleated stretched in fruit, 3.5–4 mm long increasing to 5 × 5 mm in fruit, with ca. 45 fine veins at base; **petals** 5, ± fan-shaped, ca. 10 mm long, light orange-yellow and glossy on upper surface; **stamens** 30–35, monadelphous (all fused part of length) forming an erect column bearing a dense cluster of anthers, glabrous; tube cylindric, intact column, 2 × 0.5 mm, filaments to 2.5 mm long, column and filaments pale yellow-orange; anthers dorsifixed, monotheal, 0.4 mm long, light yellow-orange; pollen light orange-yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, hidden beneath staminal column, tire-shaped, on top shallowly indented and separable between locules, ca. 1 × 2 mm, green, with stiff hairs on top and with short-stellate hairs on side and bottom and between chamber, (9–)10–13-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style sea-anemonelike, columnar portion ca. 2 × 0.35 mm whitish in range with 10–12 tentaclelike branches (1 per locule) ca. 2 × 0.1 mm, white, stigmas capitate and 0.15 mm diameter, white. **Fruit:** schizocarp, breaking into 10–12 dry, 1-seeded, indehiscent segments (mericarps), partially concealed by an overarching, dry calyx and epicalyx; intact fruit tire-shaped, 6–6.5 mm across; mericarps transversely wedge-shaped and radially C-shaped having deep notch along vertical at center, 2–3 mm long and 2 mm high, tan but more whitish at center; upper surface with radiating stiff hairs < 1 mm long and approaching center 1 peglike projection 1 mm long, outer (curved) surface from midpoint rim with a pair of short horns and lower side smooth with rounded edges, lateral (radial) faces with several radial ridges on lower half, bottom, side, and lateral faces having short stellate hairs not appressed. **Seed:** heart-shaped, ca. 2 × 2 mm, fitting tightly within chamber, dark brown, minutely textured (domed cells).

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