

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Marsilea macropoda – BIGFOOT WATER-CLOVER [Marsileaceae]

Marsilea macropoda A, Braun, BIGFOOT WATER-CLOVER. Aquatic perennial herb, clonal (likely a cultivar), rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, plantlets (ramets) initially solitary leaves (spaced along rhizomes) later appearing rosetted (condensed rhizome), when submersed with floating leaf blades, when along shoreline with spreading to ascending emergent leaves, terrestrial plantlets to 30 cm tall; shoot with long-petiolate leaves 1 per node, foliage soft-hairy, initially young, unexpanded blade curved downward (circinate vernation). **Stems:** = rhizome shallow, trailing rooted in mud or muck, stolonlike and horizontal or condensed on older rhizome, 1.5–2 mm diameter, initially white aging blackish, internodes to 40 mm long, lacking scales; adventitious roots 1–several at each node with a single leaf having an erect to ascending petiole, and often a pubescent, budlike structure (future reproductive structure). **Leaves:** helically alternate, short-pinnately (“palmately”) 4-foliolate with 2 pairs of leaflets from condensed rachis (pseudopalmate at maturity with horizontal leaflets), long-petiolate, without stipules; petiole threadlike (filiform) and shallowly channeled, in range 100–250+ × ± 0.6 mm, green and soft-hairy especially above midpoint, the hairs often having reddish knobs at cross walls; petiolule pulvinus at base of each leaflet blade, of the lower pair individual arising on upper side or rachis, of the upper pair terminal on rachis often appearing fused, reddish and darker on widely spreading leaflets, 1–2 mm long, upper side glabrous and lower side densely soft-hairy; blades of leaflets subequal, fan-shaped, in range 8–17 × 10–19 mm, length < width, green, tapered at base, straight and entire on margins, entire and wavy on top, with many fine, closely spaced veins radiating from base, densely soft-hairy (“villous”) with wavy hairs < 2.5 mm long with upward-appressed cylindrical to club-shaped basal cell, cross walls not reddish, dense hairs overhanging upper margin, sometimes aging glabrescent on upper surface. **Sporocarp (sporangium case):** in range, not observed; containing elongate sori of male and female sporangia, attached on stiff stalk at base of a moderate-sized leaf 2–4.5 mm above base of petiole; simple axis or branches erect, 8–17 mm long; case strongly ascending, elliptic in side view, 6–9 × 4.5–5.5 mm, covered with twisted and matted hairs.

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