

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Medicago minima* – SMALL MEDIC, SMALL BURCLOVER [Fabaceae]

*Medicago minima* (L.) L., SMALL MEDIC, SMALL BURCLOVER. Perennial herb, taprooted, not rosetted, several-stemmed at base, with principal branches radiating from rootstock, often with unexpanded axillary shoots, procumbent to decumbent, to 10 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves widely spaced along stems, soft-hairy. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 1.5 mm diameter, internodes to 50 mm long and > subtending leaf, short-villous. **Leaves:** helically alternate, pinnately-3-foliolate, petiolate with pulvinus, with stipules; stipules 2, attached to petiole to 2.5 mm and stem at node, asymmetrically triangular, 3–5.5 × 1–1.8 mm, with free basal lobe at base, entire to subentire and wavy or with short tooth on free margin below midpoint, acute to acuminate at tip (short-notched), not veiny, short-villous; petiole to 25 mm long, pulvinus above winglike stipule, < 1 mm long, whitish, with soft hairs, above pulvinus channeled, soft-hairy; rachis channeled, to 2.5 mm long, soft-hairy; petiolule = pulvinus, 0.7–0.8 mm long, white, soft-hairy; blades of leaflets ± obovate, to 13 × 4 mm, central leaflet > lateral leaflets, tapered at base, entire to above midpoint and low-serrate at and above where the widest, often somewhat notched at tip with a single tooth in notch, conspicuously pinnately veined having evenly spaced lateral veins, with midrib slightly sunken on upper surface and principal veins somewhat raised on lower surface, short-villous and with stalked glandular hairs. **Inflorescence:** raceme, 2-flowered, axillary, bracteate, short-villous; peduncle cylindrical, ± 1.5 mm long, short-villous; bractlet subtending pedicel wide at base and acuminate above, to 0.5 mm long, colorless, abscised after flowering; pedicel 0.4 mm long, short-villous. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, papilionaceous, 2 mm across, ca. 4 mm long; **calyx** 5-lobed, ± 3 mm long, short-villous; tube bell-shaped, 1.5 × 1.8–1.9 mm, greenish; lobes subequal, acuminate, 1.3–1.5 mm long, green with narrowly membranous margins, 1-veined, with nonglandular hairs having also stalked glandular hairs with tiny heads; **petals** 5; banner not clawed, obovate, ca. 3.6 × 2 mm, white to midpoint and light yellow above midpoint often with several faint nectar lines radiating on yellow and sometimes narrowly purple-red on outer margin; wings 2, oriented edge-on parallel with keel, clawed, claws linear, 1.5 mm long, white, limbs oblong-obovate, ca. 1.5 × 0.6–0.7 mm, light yellow, with 2 white, backward-pointing lobes, the upper lobe deltate and the lower lobe triangular; keel of 2 petals fused nearly base to tip on lower edge, fused limbs with wings, clawed, 2.3 mm long, > wings and < banner, claws separate only about 1/3 length, colorless with the 2 yellowish veins, limbs semicircular in outline straight along free top margins, 1.2 × 0.6 mm, light yellow; **stamens** 10, diadelphous (9 fused and 1 free), included in keel; filament sheet tapered, ± 1.2 mm long, white, free portion strongly curved upward, 0.5–0.9 mm long with the center filament the longest; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.2 mm long, yellowish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellowish; **pistil** 1, 2.5–2.6 mm long, short-stalked (stipe), stalk ca. 0.2 mm long; ovary superior, lanceoloid, 1.5 × 0.45 mm, green, short-hairy on lower side, 1-chambered with several ovules on upper side; style 1 mm long but curved, white, with minute terminal stigma. **Fruit:** pod (legume), spinescent and strongly 2–4-coiled, mostly 3–4-seeded, with prickles 6–8 mm across, brown, the prickles radiating from edges of pod and forward-hooked at tips (uncinate), 1–2 mm long. **Seed:** oblong or somewhat curved, 2.3–2.8 × 0.9–1.3 mm, dull brown, seed coat thin and papery; hilum at midpoint.

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