

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Melochia pyramidata – ANGEL-POD, MELOCHIA, BROOMWOOD [Malvaceae/Sterculiaceae]

Melochia pyramidata L., ANGEL-POD, MELOCHIA, BROOMWOOD. Suffrutescent subshrub (disturbed), potentially 100+ cm tall but in range < 50 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, sparsely short-hairy. **Stems:** cylindrical, initially slender, ca. 1 mm in diameter, short-hairy aging glabrescent with persistent bases of stipules. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, fused to base of petiole, acuminate, ca. 1.5 mm long, short-ciliate on margins, early-deciduous; petiole cylindrical, to 11 mm long, with abscission constriction above the base (often reddish); blade lanceolate to ovate or roundish, 10–25 × 8–20 mm, somewhat glossy, broadly tapered to subcordate at base, serrate on margins with broad teeth overlapped at bases, ovate to obtuse at tip, 3-veined or 5-veined at base with principal and minor veins sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, upper surface sparsely short-hairs and with inconspicuous, minute glandular hairs, lower surface mostly glabrate but sparsely short-hairy along veins. **Inflorescence:** condensed axillary cymes, mostly 3–4-flowered, bracteate; peduncle at anthesis of first flower 2 mm long increasing in fruit, with upward-arching short hairs; bractlet subtending pedicel narrowly triangular, to 1.5 mm long, ± ciliate; pedicel at anthesis 2.5–3 mm long, with unbranched (simple) and stellate short hairs and approaching flower with several glandular hairs; lacking bracteoles (no epicalyx). **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 6 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, green, 4.5–4.9 mm long, with scattered short hairs; tube bell-shaped, at anthesis ca. 2 × 2 mm, 10-ridged, with scattered short hairs; lobes acuminate-triangular, 2.5–2.8 mm long, with 3 raised veins converging at tip, the veins red-streaked, outer (lower) surface with some stellate hairs having several arms ascending from base, inner surface short-hairy; **petals** 5, fused ca. 0.5 mm to base of staminal tube, fused portion green, oblanceolate, 5–5.5 × 1.5 mm, above pale green with colorless margins changing to yellow and above midpoint pink-purple; **stamens** 5, monadelphous (fused into column), ca. 4.5 mm long; tube ca. 1 mm long, green; free filaments greenish above tube to whitish and then pinkish approaching anthers; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ± horizontal (versatile), 0.8–0.9 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **pistil** 1, 3.3–3.5 mm long, short-stalked (stipe weakly defined from ovary); ovary superior, ellipsoid, 1 mm long, green, with subsessile glandular hairs above midpoint, 3–5-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules; style with constriction at top of ovary, erect, green with short hairs, with 3–5 erect branches, the branches tentaclelike and stigmatic, 1.2–1.3 × 0.2 mm, pale green to midpoint and white above midpoint. **Fruit:** capsule, papery and somewhat inflated, loculicidal, winged with 3–5 chambered having to 2 seeds per chamber, 8 × 10 mm (including beak) and spreading wings, in top view star-shaped, tannish with brown veins, valves acuminate to needlelike (aristate), having raised veins; calyx U-shaped in fruit, 5-lobed, lobes spreading and acuminate. **Seed:** arillate, ovoid blunt at top, 1.8–2.3 × 1.2–1.4 mm, brown to light brown, having fine, lengthwise stripes; aril surrounding base of seed and along 1 side, colorless.

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