

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Muscari neglectum – STARCH GRAPE-HYACINTH [Hyacinthaceae]

Muscari neglectum Guss., STARCH GRAPE-HYACINTH. Perennial herb, clonal, geophytic, bulb-bearing, fibrous-rooted, rosetted, scapose with 1–2 ascending, axillary inflorescences, in range < 20 cm tall; shoots of mother bulb with (3–)4–6 ascending basal leaves, leafy during flowering, completely glabrous, lacking odor of garlic or onion; bulb ovoid, in range to 18 × 17 mm, white covered with tight, thin, brown outer layer (tunic), tunic broken and damaged especially below midpoint, lacking conspicuous veins; adventitious roots of parent bulb 10+, from stem at base of bulb, the longest to 100 mm long; bulblets at flowering present around base of parent bulb, each with 1–several fine fibrous roots from stem at base and forming at least 1 subcylindric leaf. **Stem (scape):** subcylindric, to 150 × 1.5–1.8 mm, white in bulb and below ground, green aboveground to somewhat violet approaching flowers. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple and sheathing; sheath closed, white, thick and fleshy, never extending above soil surface, persistent around bulb (resembling onion); blade flexible, long-linear, in range < 100–250+ × 1.5–4.8 mm, dark green, folded inward in bud becoming curved upward without midrib (channeled or sulcate), entire, acute at tip (tip rarely present on exposed leaves), of bulblets first leaf often solid with conic tip, obscurely parallel-veined. **Inflorescence:** raceme, axillary to principal inner leaf of tuber, 20–40-flowered, flowers helically alternate with several terminal, smaller, sterile flowers, ovoid, 20–45 × ± 15 mm, with only 2–3 flowers pollinating at once, bracteate, glabrous; bracts subtending raceme absent; bractlet subtending pedicel ± fan-shaped, 0.3–0.7 × 0.4–0.6 mm, white, persistent; rachis mostly violet and glaucous, somewhat angular, with internodes < 1 mm long; pedicel at anthesis spreading, 2–2.8 mm long, pale violet, in indented at base of flower, aging arching so flowers with developing fruits nodding. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 3–3.4 mm across, urn-shaped (obovoid in bud); **perianth (tepals)** 6-lobed, in range 5–6 mm long, segments fused most of length, in range bright violet and glaucous but at anthesis lobes pale violet to white; tube subtly 6-ribbed aging longitudinally dimpled in early fruit, mucilaginous when handled; lobes dimorphic alternating obtuse (outer whorl) and acute (narrower inner whorl), < 1 mm long, at anthesis becoming spreading above midpoint; **stamens** 6, fused to perianth tube near midpoint, the 3 of lower set 1.5 mm from base of tube and opposite wider lobes and the 3 of upper set 2 mm from base of tube and opposite narrower lobes; filament ascending, ca. 0.7 mm long, violet and tapered to top, glabrous; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal and facing toward center, 1.1–1.3 mm long, very dark green covered with deep violet bumps, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **nectary** not visible; **pistil** 1, 2.5–2.8 mm long, with stigma at height of anthers; ovary superior, broadly ovoid and slightly 3-lobed, 1.3–1.4 × ca. 1.5 mm, green, with 6 inconspicuous grooves, minutely papillate, glabrous, 3-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules attached to center; style from pistil midpoint, gradually tapered with 3 broad ridges; stigma terminal, 3-lobed, short-papillate. **Fruit:** infrequently observed, capsule, loculicidal, dehiscent by 3 valves, 1(–6)-seeded, conspicuously 3-lobed, in range ca. 6 × 8 mm, wall thick, green, and mucilaginous drying papery, lobes D-shaped, 6 × 3.5–4 mm, glabrous; pedicel straight, ca. 5 mm long, recessed at base of fruit. **Seed:** mature seed not observed, ± ellipsoid, ca. 3 ×

1 mm, black, wall thick and mucilaginous drying papery; pedicel in fruit straight, 5 mm long, indented into base of fruit.

A. C. Gibson