

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Parthenocissus quinquefolia – VIRGINIA CREEPER [Vitaceae]

Parthenocissus quinquefolia (L.) Planch., VIRGINIA CREEPER. Woody climber (liana), drought-deciduous, with tendrils, mostly fibrous-rooted along woody axes, climbing over adjacent vegetation and along trunk and principal branches into canopy; shoots with only cauline leaves and tendrils; tendril opposite leaf at node, sparsely short-hairy, treelike (dendritic) mostly with 6 ascending branches successively arising 2-forked from the central, zigzagged central axis, in range < 45 mm long, the lowest, longest branch to 35 mm long before twisting and coiling, with bract subtending each fork, bract ± oblong at the lowest not to awl-shaped above, the lowest bract to 5 mm long, membranous with raised green midvein decreasing upward and cupped at tip, short-ciliate on margins; branch axes mostly glabrous with a short hook at tips. **Stems:** nearly cylindrical, zigzagged or not, internodes of creeping stems to 100 mm long and covered with periderm and having adventitious roots where touching soil, woody twigs tough and flexible, to ca. 4 mm diameter, bark red-brown, twigs with scattered, elliptic lenticels, glabrous. **Leaves:** helically alternate, odd-1-palmately compound with (3–)5 sessile leaflets, long-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, attached across node, asymmetric to nearly symmetric triangular to broadly lanceolate-triangular (knife-shaped), 7–11 × 1.5–3.8 mm, mostly off-white with greenish center or veins, often with 1 straight and 1 curved edge; petiole pulvinus well-developed to reorient leaves, to 10 mm long, above cylindrical but channeled approaching blade, < 60–270 mm long, tough; glabrous but at top with a tuft of coarse, upright short hairs between petiole and petiolules; petiolules < 2 mm long and indistinct from blade, tough, with raised midvein and ascending edges; blades of leaflets obovate or ovate, < 20–140 × < 9–80 mm, terminal leaflet the largest but not significantly so, tapered at base folded up winged at base, coarsely serrate (acute to acuminate at teeth tips) mostly above midblade on margins and teeth initially with white point, acute at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins raised on both surfaces, having a vein end in each point and at each sinus, initially upper surface with erect, puberulent hairs and short-hairy along veins, lower surface short-hairy at top of petiole and along midrib. **Inflorescence:** panicle with cymes, opposite leaf at node (like a tendril), ovate in outline, to 120 × 70 mm, ± 2-dimensional having successive alternating lateral, primary branches < 9, having pair of axis unequal at each fork, primary branches to 40 × 20 mm ascending on upper side of panicle, 50–100+ flowers with 6–10 secondary branchlets, secondary branchlet to 15 mm long, = a straight axis with a terminal tight, umbel-like cluster of (2–)7–15 flowers, bracteate, soft-hairy on axes; peduncle cylindrical, to 11 mm long, short-hairy; panicle primary rachis ± zigzagged; bract opposite each branch, acuminate-triangular (the largest stipulelike), to 7 × 2 mm decreasing upward, including a persistent bract base 1 mm long, the largest 3-veined at base, aging brown and papery, minutely ciliate on margins, sometimes tinged red; bract opposite each primary branch, acuminate-triangular, ± 1–5 mm long, greenish aging papery, with several parallel veins from base, minutely ciliate on margins; secondary branches radiating from axis, to 15 mm long, axis short-hairy; bracts and bractlets subtending umbel collectively involucrelike, triangular to ovate often cupped to somewhat sheathing, the lower ones often deltate, ca. 1 mm with a raised base and keeled with green enlarged midridge and membranous margins, upper bractlets < pedicel, < 1 mm long, green. with a pair of narrower stipules; pedicel cylindrical, 2–3 mm long increasing in fruit,

green, puberulent. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 8–9 mm across; **calyx** unlobed or with to 4 or 5 remote teeth on thin margin and cup-shaped, ca. 2×2.5 mm, light green, often puberulent at base; **petals** 5, free, tightly abutted forming a caplike bud cover (calyptra), petals separating downward, at anthesis widely spreading and then abscising at base, slipperlike arching from base, \pm acute-elliptic in outline, ca. 4×1.5 mm, green but whitish at base, hooded ca. $2/3$ of length, with inward-facing margins (in bud) and infolded margins, glabrous; **stamens** 5, free, opposite petals and in bud each held in place by hood of petal, at anthesis ascending; filaments exerted, ascending, flattened front-to-back, 2.9–3.3 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 1.4–2 mm long, pale yellow to cream-colored, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen copious, white to pale yellow; **nectary disc** inconspicuous around base of ovary; **pistil** 1, minutely 5-ribbed base-to-top, ca. 2 mm long; ovary superior, 5-angled, beige, glabrous, 2-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules attached at base of central placentae; style indistinguishable from ovary with terminal stigma below level of anthers, colorless. **Fruit:** berry, fleshy, 1–4-seeded, spheric to subspheroid, $5.5\text{--}7.5 \times 5\text{--}7.5$ mm, purple often glaucous, smooth; pulp (mesocarp) watery, pinkish, inner portion at maturity green and intact; pedicel 4–5 mm long, puberulent to glabrescent. **Seed:** 3-sided rounded on back with 2 flat lateral sides or hemispheric, in range $4\text{--}5.5 \times 4\text{--}5 \times 2\text{--}2.5$ mm (1-seeded lacking a flat side), at maturity green drying brown.

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