

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Penstemon cobaea – WILD FOXGLOVE, COBAEA PENSTEMON, BALMONY [Plantaginaceae]

Penstemon cobaea Nutt., WILD FOXGLOVE, COBAEA PENSTEMON, BALMONY. Perennial herb, not rosetted, several-stemmed at base, in range to 60 cm long; shoots with only cauline leaves, short-hairy with curved to straight hairs. **Stems:** cylindrical, < 5 mm diameter, yellow-green tinged red-purple, densely short-hairy to puberulent. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple and sessile fused across node, without stipules; blade lanceolate or ovate to elliptic or oblanceolate, (25–)58–105 × (8–)15–30+ mm, dark green, long-tapered at base, serrate on margins, acute at tip, pinnately veined with midrib conspicuously raised on lower surface, short-hairy with hairs downward-arching, upper surface ± glossy. **Inflorescence:** cymes paired at each node subtending by leaflike bract, opposite decussate, cyme 1–5-flowered, bracteate, short-pilose and glandular-pubescent; bracts 2 subtending peduncle 2, leaflike, narrowly ovate, to 50 mm long, with basal lobes but not clasping; peduncle stemlike, internodes mostly 35–40 mm long, glandular-pubescent; bract subtending cyme leaflike, lanceolate, to 35 × 8 mm, with basal lobes; bractlet subtending pedicel acuminate-lanceolate, to 8 mm long, decreasing upward; pedicel 3–4 mm long increasing 2× in flower and fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, 14–25+ mm across; **calyx** 2-lipped, deeply 5-lobed, 11–12 mm long, green, faintly parallel-veined, outer surface glandular short-pilose; tube < 1 mm long; lower 2 lobes triangular overlapping at base, 10–10.5 × 3.5–4.2 mm, with membranous margin to midpoint, upper 3 lobes ovate, the largest 9.5–10 × 5 mm overlapping inner 2 9 × 4 mm, cordate at base and somewhat jagged on margins; **corolla** 2-lipped, 5-lobed, 36–38 mm long; tube ± 3-sided, 9–9.5 × 4 mm, pinkish and white, 2 sides with 5–6 veins, at base 3 mm across, upper portion ± bell-shaped and somewhat inflated; throat funnel-shaped, ca. 12 mm long, light purple to pale purple (white) with many parallel veins, inside throat with ca. 7 deep purple honey guide lines on floor; lips with sinuses 9–10 mm deep, upper lip 2-lobed, lobes overlapping on inner margins, rounded, ca. 6 × 8–9 mm, with scattered glandular short-pilose hairs; lower lip 3-lobed; **stamens** 4 fertile + 1 staminode, lower stamens attached at base of corolla, upper stamens attached 9–10 mm long from base of corolla (top of corolla tube); filaments somewhat compressed side-to-side, sigmoidal, to 20 mm long, on lower side opposite purple nectar guides; anthers ± versatile, dithecal, horseshoe-shaped, ca. 3 × 2.5 mm, frosty light violet (glaucous), longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; staminode arising from upper side of throat, straight, ca. 22 mm long, white with orangish hairs on flat upper surface except at base, upper 5 mm compressed side-to-side and purple-red; **nectary disc** around base of ovary, wavy with 5 cycles, 0.2 × 2 mm diameter, green to dark green; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, ca. 3 × 2.2 mm, green, steeper on upper side, glabrous, 2-chambered, each chamber with many ovules attached to center; style cylindrical, 22–23.5 mm long, green at base and white above; stigma terminal. **Fruit:** capsule, 2-valved, many-seeded, ovoid, 9.5–17 × 5.5–12 mm + beaklike tip (style) to 4 mm long and slender portion above, brown or golden brown to dark brown, often pinched below beak, hard-walled, veiny, tardily splitting from top downward. **Seed:** irregular polyhedral with 4–7 faces and wings or ridgelike edges, 2–3.5 × 1.1–2 mm, black, pitted (collapsed cells).

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