

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Phoradendron serotinum subsp. *serotinum* – INJERTO, SYCAMORE MISTLETOE
[Santalaceae]

Phoradendron serotinum (Raf.) M. C. Johnst. subsp. *serotinum*, INJERTO, SYCAMORE MISTLETOE. Parasitic woody perennial, evergreen, forming attachment on host branch, with ascending to spreading and pendent shoots, to 130 cm long from woody base, canopy somewhat spheroid; dioecious; shoots with leathery green leaves, \pm moderately short velvety pubescent with whitish hairs, especially on very young growth. **Stems:** cylindrical, flexible when herbaceous, more rigid and not easily breaking at nodes when woody but axes brittle and easily broken, swollen at nodes, internodes 10–31 mm long, velvety pubescent or sometimes aging glabrescent. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole slightly flattened, oblong to elliptic in \times -section, mostly < 10 mm long, grading into blade, velvety pubescent; blade broadly elliptic to obovate or round, 13–38(–77) \times 2–27(–32) mm, not fleshy, ca. 0.6 mm thick, broadly tapered to tapered at base, entire, obtuse to rounded at tip, palmately veined with (3)5 principal veins slightly raised on lower surface, dull, soft velvety pubescent sometimes aging glabrescent. **Inflorescences:** interrupted, unisexual “spikes,” spikes 1–2 per leaf axil, ascending, of 3–5 internodes (segments) with the lowest segment sterile, segments greenish yellow, tapered only at base where hidden by nodal bracts, densely short-hairy on all exposed parts, with flowers sunken in pits ± 0.6 mm deep having a crownlike rim; bracts (cataphylls) opposite decussate at each node, reduced, fused into a collar around base of each segment, truncate (staminate) or broadly obtuse (pistillate). **Staminate inflorescence:** spike to 30 mm long, typically with internodes 2–5 \times ca. 1.5 mm, each fertile portion barrel-shaped and at base of internode, with several–14 flowers. **Staminate flower:** roundish in bud, 0.9–1.4 mm wide; **perianth** 3(–4) segments, not overlapping (valvate) in bud, segments \pm erect at anthesis, broadly triangular to broadly ovate, (0.5–)0.7 \times 0.8–1.1 mm, fleshy, dull greenish yellow, erect pubescent on outer surface; **stamens** 3(–4), opposite and fused to base of perianth segment; filament absent (anther sessile); anther dithecal, ± 0.3 mm long, light yellow, dehiscing by a terminal slit; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1, abortive; ovary inferior, broadly triangular inversely conic, shallowly 3(–4)-ridged, dark green; style short, colorless. **Pistillate inflorescence:** typically with 3–5 internodes (segments), with fertile portions subspheroid and in middle of internodes to 5 \times 1.5 mm, mostly with several–14 flowers. **Pistillate flower:** circular in bud, 1–1.3 mm wide at anthesis; **perianth** 3(–4) segments, segments attached to rim of ovary, valvate in bud, \pm erect and slightly open at anthesis, broadly triangular, ca. 0.6 mm long, fleshy, greenish yellow aging orangish and blushed red, mostly glabrous on outer surface but with a line of short hairs on angle formed by fusion with ovary; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, broadly inversely conic, ca. 0.7 mm long at anthesis, 3-lobed, with lobes alternate with perianth segments, green, nectar-producing on top but not minutely cobblestonelike, 1-chambered with chamber filled with a fleshy, green, placentalike mass, with 2 undifferentiated, minute ovules at base; style conic, short, aging with red stigmatic surface. **Fruit:** berry, 1-seeded, subspheroid to broadly ellipsoid or obovoid, 4.4–5.8 \times 3.5–4.9 mm, whitish; fruit wall (exocarp) \pm leathery; pulp gelatinous, very sticky when drying, colorless and semitranslucent. **Seed:** compressed-ellipsoid to compressed-obovoid, 2.5–4.5 \times 2–3 mm + a pair of teeth at tip, bright green with slender, longitudinal, white strands extending

from the base of the seed to 1 tooth or with white membranous coat concealing most of the green seed; tooth narrowly acute, 0.7–1 mm long, whitish.

A. C. Gibson & B. A. Prigge