

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Physalis cinerascens* var. *cinerascens* – VISCID GROUNDCHERRY, BEACH GROUNDCHERRY  
[Solanaceae]

*Physalis cinerascens* (Dunal) Hitchc. var. *cinerascens*, VISCID GROUNDCHERRY, BEACH GROUNDCHERRY. Perennial herb, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, branches ascending and forking at each branch fork, axes from the fork unequal, in range < 30 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, foliage green with scattered hairs so green surface visible, pubescence of treelike (dendritic hairs) with stalk and 2–5 principal arms; new shoots arising just below ground level. **Stems:** ± cylindrical, to 3.5 mm diameter, with 2 ridges descending from each leaf, tough, green or ridges sometimes purplish red, internodes to 60 mm long, with uniformly distributed dendritic hairs having 3–5 principal axes. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole channeled with sunken midvein and raised edges, 20–45 mm long, not channeled at base; blade ovate, 30–65 × 20–50 mm, subtruncate and often conspicuously asymmetric at base, dentate with rounded tips on margins, obtuse at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, veins often whitish, upper surface green with widely scattered dendritic hairs, lower surface paler, hairs mostly with 2–4 principal arms. **Inflorescence:** flowers solitary, axillary at branch forks, pendent on long pedicel, lacking bracts, soft-pubescent with dendritic hairs; pedicel lax, cylindrical and slender, in flower 10–15 mm long increasing 2× in fruit, with scattered, short, dendritic hairs. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 15–20 mm across; receptacle raised above calyx ca. 1 mm (below corolla), greenish; **calyx** 5-lobed, bell-shaped, appearing truncate at base but indented and reflexed ca. 1 mm, at anthesis 6–7 mm long (including indentation) increasing in fruit, at anthesis grayish green, densely dendritic-tomentose; tube barrel-shaped with parallel sides above indented base, with 5 raised ridges, inner surface glossy green and glabrous, with acute sinuses; lobes suberect, nearly deltate, at anthesis 2–2.4 mm, acute, having midvein to tip, inner surface with hairs approaching tip and ± conspicuous minor veins; **corolla** broadly and shallowly 5-lobed (scarcely defined), nearly platelike to broadly funnel-shaped, pleated in bud, 10–11 mm long; tube + throat broadly funnel-shaped, base of tube white and glabrous, above dull light yellow, at midpoint with 5 rectangular deep purple blotches (filling center of flower) below each lobe, the blotches 2–2.5 × 3–3.2 mm, throat densely white woolly on yellow tissue and lower border of purple blotch; lobes short-dendritic ciliate on margins, inner (upper) surface without hairs, lower surface dendritic-hairy especially along raised veins (only above purple blotches); **stamens** 5, fused to corolla 2 mm above base; filaments erect, 2.6–3 mm long, purplish, 3-sided with ridge on inner side and rounded on back, woolly to midpoint; anthers opposite yellow corolla, basifixed, dithecal, 3.2–3.7 mm long, in bud greenish white aging purple, longitudinally and inwardly dehiscent; pollen white, copious; **nectary disc** around base of ovary, 5-lobed, 1 × 2 mm, green; **pistil** 1, 9–10 mm long; ovary superior, ± ovoid truncate at top, ca. 2.5 × 1.5 mm, light green, glabrous, 2-chambered, each chamber with many ovules; style erect, straight, ca. 7 × 0.35 mm, streaked light purple but greenish approaching top; stigma exerted, terminal, short 2-lobed, the greenish stigmatic lobes appressed. **Fruit:** berry, pendent on flexible pedicel, hidden in inflated, nearly closed calyx; berry many-seeded, spheric, 7–10 mm, before drying light yellow-green and light tan aging yellowish to brownish,

sometimes with shallow dimples, glabrous; pulp green and fleshy (not watery), with flattish segments separating individual seeds; inside calyx with nectary disc surrounding base of fruit; calyx "lantern-shaped," appearing top-shaped with depressed, craterlike base, before drying 18–22 × 14–17 mm, dull green, drying papery pale brown with netted venation and conspicuously 10-ribbed with the angles to lobes alternating with lower ribs to sinuses, sinuses at tip to 4 mm long, the acute lobes nearly touching (opening ca. 1 mm across), each lobe with 3 veins converging at tip, outer (lower) surface with scattered dendritic hairs and some unbranched hairs to 0.1 mm long; pedicel drooping, to 30 × 0.8 mm enlarged approaching calyx, dark green drying brown, outer surface with scattered short, dendritic hairs, inner surface glabrous with sunken ribs. **Seed:** waferlike ± disclike and the narrow one somewhat kidney-shaped in outline, 1.4–1.8 mm long, in fruit white aging yellowish, shallowly pitted.

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