

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

*Polygonella americana* – AMERICAN JOINTWEED, SOUTHERN JOINTWEED [Polygonaceae]

*Polygonella americana* (Fisch. & C. A. Meyer) Small, AMERICAN JOINTWEED, SOUTHERN JOINTWEED. Subshrub, with canopy having numerous terminal inflorescences, in range to 80 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, glabrous. **Stems:** appearing to 4 mm diameter but more slender and completely hidden by at least 2 ensheathing leaves (ocreas). **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, with stipules; stipules (2) fused as cylinder (ocrea), length difficult to determine, initially acute to obtuse at tip (on opposite side of blade); blade linear,  $< 10 \times 0.6\text{--}0.7$  mm, 2-veined at base, flattened and white at acute tip, venation obscure except minutely channeled at base. **Inflorescence:** panicle of 1–several branches each having 1–several racemelike axes, racemelike axis 15+-flowered, flowers helically alternate and maturing from top downward, bracteate, glabrous; peduncle subtended by closed ocrea to 12 mm long, aging papery brown,  $\pm$  truncate at top with short extensions of 8–10 principal veins; peduncle cylindric, to 25 mm long; branch with pulvinus in axil of fork, subtended by closed ocrea, ocrea sometimes with deltate lobe or shoulder at top; bract arising from top of ocrea to 10 mm long, green, with short point at tip; bractlet subtending pedicel an ocrea, ensheathing and membranous, to 1.5 mm long, with awl-shaped blade ca. 2.5 mm long, blade  $\pm$  green but colorless at narrow tip; pedicel arising laterally and having a wide, disclike base (leaving a circular scar), axis compressed and ridged on 2 edges descending from sepals, ca. 2.5 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral,  $4\text{--}5 \times 4 \times 5$  mm; receptacle funnel-shaped, green,  $0.6\text{--}0.7 \times 1$  mm; **sepals** 2, opposite, reflexed, inversely heart-shaped, cupped, and keeled (appearing hatchet-shaped in side view), ca.  $2.2 \times 2.5$  mm, pure white with green keel, rounded to cordate at base with lobes ca. 0.4 mm long, short-clawed, rounded at tip; **petals** 3,  $\pm$  rounded and symmetric or somewhat asymmetric,  $3.3\text{--}3.5 \times 2.5\text{--}3$  mm, white with green only at attached base, subtruncate at base or 1 side wider and forming a short lobe, somewhat wavy on margins, rounded or shallowly notched at tip; **stamens** 8, fused into ring at base; ring ca. 0.3 mm long; filaments heteromorphic,  $\pm$  2.5 mm long, 3 broadly winglike below midpoint with linear tip, to 0.8 mm wide and sometimes with cream-colored, toothlike shoulder, 2 narrowly triangular tapered to tip, 3  $\pm$  linear; anthers versatile-dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.5–0.8 mm long, cream-colored aging light beige, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1, with styles exerted above erect petals; ovary superior, conspicuously 3-lobed (ovate-rhombate in outline), ca.  $3 \times 1.5$  mm, glossy white, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 3, ascending,  $\pm$  0.8 mm long, white; stigmas terminal, orange. **Fruit:** achene, dispersed within perianth and with pedicel; achene 3-angled, to  $3.2 \times 1.7$  mm, glossy reddish brown with brown angles, smooth; having 3 persistent styles and achene surrounded by a ring of stamens.

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