

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Ranunculus pusillus – LOW SPEARWORT [Ranunculaceae]

Ranunculus pusillus Poiret (incl. var. *angustifolium* of some authors), LOW SPEARWORT. Aquatic annual, fibrous-rooted, not rosetted, 1-stemmed at base, having an open branched inflorescence, erect to ascending, in range to 20 cm tall; shoot with 1–2 basal leaves and 1–several widely spaced cauline leaves (below cymose canopy) on a weak axis, basal leaves mostly absent at flowering, glabrous; adventitious roots at base of shoot, relatively short and white. **Stems:** cylindric, 1 mm diameter, internodes in range < 50 mm long, yellowish. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate and long-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, membranous wings attached to lower petiole from leaf base, 2.5–9+ mm long; petiole somewhat flared at base (with stipules), above channeled, in range slender, to 45 mm long and \geq blade; blade ovate (lower leaves) to narrowly elliptic, in range < 15–37 \times to 9 mm decreasing upward to sessile bracts of inflorescence, tapered to long-tapered at base, entire and remotely dentate on margins, mostly obtuse at tip, venation inconspicuous. **Inflorescence:** cyme, \pm leafy, terminal and axillary, open, each principal branch with < 5 flowers, bracteate, glabrous; bract (bractlet) subtending cyme (the lowest pedicel) leaflike with stipular wings on petiole, lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, decreasing upward; pedicel cylindric, 15–70 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 3 mm across; receptacle in center of flower elongate and candlelike (torus), 3–5 mm long, greenish white, lacking hairs, persistent after fruits abscised; **sepals** in range (3–)4(–5, not observed in range), helically alternate and strongly cupped covering flower bud, \pm rounded to broadly ovate and widely spreading, cupped upward, ca. 1.2 mm long with a short hinge at the base and convex limb ca. 1 \times 1 mm, faintly colored with a patch pale green and the outermost sepal often blushed reddish, after pollination limb reflexed before sepal abscised; **petals** in range 1(–3), spreading, obovate, ca. 1.3 \times 0.5 mm, colorless at base and pale light yellow above, not notably glossy, above midpetal on upper surface having a small, squarish **nectary scale** attached on 3 edges with open side facing inward; **stamens** in range 4–5, helically alternate, never evenly spaced, free; filaments ascending, ca. 1 mm long, translucent; anthers basifixed, dithecal, \pm 0.4 mm, light yellow aging orange, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen nearly colorless; **pistils** mostly 40–60, helically alternate in tight array (3/8 phyllotaxis), appearing raspberrylike (aggregate fruit of *Rubus*) in a domelike array; ovaries superior, initially subspheroid, 0.35–0.4 mm, green, minutely textured (convex cells), each ovary 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style with stigma, < 0.1 mm long, disclike near top of ovary out-facing, green. **Fruits:** achenes, attached to torus abscised when mature, cluster raspberrylike, in range mostly 3.5–5 \times 3 mm, each achene blump lens-shaped, in range 0.8–1.0 mm, yellowish brown, thick-walled around girdle, bumpy (tuberculate), lacking a beak (persistent style).

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