

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Rumex pulcher – FIDDLE DOCK [Polygonaceae]

Rumex pulcher L., FIDDLE DOCK. Perennial herb, thick-taprooted, rosetted, 1-stemmed at base, unbranched below inflorescence, ascending to erect, in range to 120 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, nearly glabrous; taproot branched or not, bark purplish. **Stems:** cylindric at base of plant and to 13-ridged above, with ridge descending from each cauline leaf, green or aging pink to rose-red, with long internodes spacing cauline leaves, slightly but noticeably bent at each node; node \pm swollen. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, with stipules; stipules (2) fused into cylinder sheathing stem (ocrea), pink-membranous, eventually splitting lengthwise; petiole hemi-cylindric and ridged, < 120 mm long, flexible, puberulent along edges; blade lanceolate to elliptic, 70–200 \times < 60 mm (basal leaves) decreasing upward, subcordate to truncate and wavy at base, entire or crenate and minutely wavy on margins, acute at tip (acute to obtuse for upper cauline leaves), pinnately veined with midrib conspicuously raised on lower surface, bluish green and fine-glittery or crystalline, upper surface senescing dull yellow, lower surface papillate along veins. **Inflorescence:** panicle of racemes, terminal, open, \pm erect to ascending, with several lateral branches widely spaced along main axis, raceme interrupted having helically alternate clusters of 2–15+ flowers (fascicles, glomerules) at each node a pseudowhorled clusters not complete around node, clusters unequally spaced along rachis, bracteate, glabrous; axes ridged; bract with ocrea subtending lateral branch and each fascicle, leaflike, greatly decreasing upward to ovate and 2.5 mm long, later often abscised so appearing to be only ocreas; pedicel curved outward, at anthesis to 3 mm long increasing 2 \times in fruit, having a swelling at midpoint or ca. 1/3 from base at which abscission may occur. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, at anthesis ca. 1.5 mm wide, protandrous; **perianth** 6-lobed, lobes (tepals) in 2 different whorls; tube cup-shaped, 0.3–1 mm long, green; lobes of outer whorl (calyx) awl-shaped to ovate, 0.6–1.5 mm long, green with narrow membranous margins; lobes of inner whorl (corolla) oblong-obovate or tongue-shaped and cupped, 1.2–2 mm long, lobes green with white margins, initially entire aging toothed, midvein below midpoint initially slightly raised later becoming enlarged (tubercle); **stamens** 6, arising on rim of perianth tube; filaments flattened front-to-back, < 0.4 mm long, pale pink to whitish; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 1–1.2 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, obovoid and strongly 3-angled, at anthesis 0.7 mm long, whitish, glabrous, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 3, appressed downward along edges, 0.5 mm long, reddish, with minute stigmas. **Fruit:** achene enclosed by persistent, dry perianth (diclesium) with persistent pedicel; lobes of outer perianth whole narrowly acuminate, 1.5–2.5 mm long, lobes of inner whole \pm deltate-ovate, 4 mm long, each inner lobe with a conspicuous tubercle (callus), conspicuously veiny lobe dark purplish red drying dark brown, and having several prominent, projecting spines on margins; tubercles ovoid, > 1/2 lobe, unequal and one larger, yellowish white, the largest 3 \times 1.5 mm, bumpy; spines 2–5 per margin, to 1.6 mm long, lobe margin never dissected (not touching tubercle); achene 3-angled ovoid, in range 2–2.3 mm long, glossy brown.

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