

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Saururus cernuus – LIZARD'S-TAIL, WATER DRAGON [Saururaceae]

Saururus cernuus L., LIZARD'S-TAIL, WATER DRAGON. Aquatic perennial herb, rhizomatous, clonal in monoculture stands, fibrous-rooted from rhizome, not rosetted, 1-stemmed at base from rhizome, with axillary lateral branches in canopy, erect with nodding inflorescences in canopy, 50–100 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, initially short-tomentose with colorless hairs aging with no hairs; mildly scented when crushed; rhizome shallow, creeping and horizontal with upright branch with terminal shoot, elliptic to circle in \times -section, to 10×7 mm, whitish, with circular scale scars at nodes, internodes of creeping portion to 23 mm long, of upright portion 2.5–8 mm long, cataphylls sheathing and touching but open, tightly appressed to internode, < 7 mm long, whitish, with subterminal tip; pith of rhizome solid with thickened cell walls; adventitious roots several–many in ring at each rhizome node. **Stem:** ridged or aging cylindric, 5–7 mm diameter, with to 9 ridges descending from leaf sheath, internodes to 100 mm long and leaf scars circular, green initially short-hairy and with ridges aging brownish without hairs. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple with sheath, petiolate, without stipules; prophyll at base of lateral branch in canopy, open, acuminate, to 10 mm long, colorless or with rose cells along margins; sheath closed, basal closed portion ridged, short–5 mm long; petiole lower portion (lower cauline leaves) or base-to-blade = sheathlike, cupped upward and with thin margins whitish often tinged rose, 25–50 mm long, upper petiole (lower cauline leaves) solid, ca. 2 mm across, green, and flattish to concave on upper side, lower side of petiole initially short-hairy; blade mostly inversely heart-shaped, in range mostly $40\text{--}130 \times 29\text{--}137$ mm, thin and easily desiccated, cordate at base with rounded basal lobes, entire, acute at tip, of the lowest cauline leaf (at mud level) narrowly ovate (tapered at base with petiole 25 mm long) ca. 25×9 mm, pinnately veined mostly with 5 veins at base slightly sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surface, lateral veins curved-ascending, immature leaves with soft hairs especially along veins but absent on mature leaves. **Inflorescence:** raceme, arising at node opposite petiole of cauline leaf, spikelike, in range fully elongated mostly to $200 \times 12\text{--}15$ mm, of 175–350 radiating, bisexual flowers, flowers alternate unequally spaced and not strictly helically arranged (sometimes appearing paired side-by-side), bracteate, short-pubescent, sweet-fragrant; peduncle ascending, \pm ridged, to 60×3 mm, green, short-hairy; rachis strongly ridged with 1 ridge descending from each bractlet, \pm mm diameter, white, velveteen conspicuously short soft-hairy; bractlet subtending and fused to pedicel, boat-shaped and \pm elliptic and cupped, 1.5–3.6 mm long, before anthesis somewhat keeled and cream-colored to greenish approaching tip aging rounded on back mostly white and cream to greenish at rounded tip, sparsely short-ciliate on margins, soft short-hairy on back (lower) surface, persistent; pedicel cylindric appearing winged (bractlet tissue), 1–1.5 mm, white. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. \pm mm across; **perianth** absent; stamens (3–)4–7(–8), free; filaments ascending, subequal, 3–5 mm long, white; anthers basifixed, dithecal, elliptic in outline, 0.8–1 mm long, cream-colored, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen cream-colored; **pistil** 1 (appearing several), of segments fused only at base, 1–1.3 mm long; ovary superior, typically segments (3–)4(–5), ovoid, ca. 0.7×0.5 mm, white, bumpy on surface (rugulose), each chamber with 2 ovules; style with stigma inward-coiled pointing to center of flower, stigma decurrent to top of

ovary. **Fruit:** schizocarp, of ± 4 achenelike, 1-seeded mericarps, mericarps ovoid, $1.5-3 \times 1.0-1.3$ mm, brown, rugulose. **Seed:** enclosed in mericarp, ovoid, $1-1.3 \times 0.7-1$ mm, smooth.

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