

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Silene gallica – SMALL-FLOWER CATCHFLY, WINDMILL PINK [Caryophyllaceae]

Silene gallica L., SMALL-FLOWER CATCHFLY, WINDMILL PINK. Annual, taprooted, weakly rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, unbranched and erect or with several decumbent lower branches and branching at base of inflorescence, large individual often with 1 ascending lateral branch at each node separated by long internodes, in range 15–30(–65) cm tall; shoots firm-villous or moderately hirsute and short-villous nonglandular hairs, the long hairs to 1.5 mm long erect to spreading and multicellular becoming crinkled, the short hairs generally arched downward approaching tip, hairs being mostly replaced by stalked glandular hairs in the inflorescence and viscid. **Stems:** cylindric, with swelling at and just above each node, to 4 mm diameter with swelling 2×, tough, green but soon becoming purplish red, internodes to 100 mm long. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, short-petiolate (basal leaves) and sessile with pair fused across node having V-notches at midpoints, without stipules; petiole winged and indistinct from blade, wings thin, long hairs conspicuous on margins and along fused base; blade oblanceolate to lanceolate or oblong, 5–80 × 3–16 mm, dull, long-tapered at base, entire and often wavy on margins, broadly acute to rounded with short point at tip, pinnately veined but midrib only conspicuous and raised on lower surface, with either scattered nonglandular or nonglandular and denser glandular hairs, lower surface more hairy. **Inflorescence:** racemelike or spikelike, terminal, open, mostly 1-sided, many-flowered, bracteate, viscid-glandular with stalked glandular hairs and usually stoutly pubescent; peduncle to 90 mm long, rachis internodes successively shorter; bractlets paired, leaflike and sessile, asymmetrically fused around axis, lanceolate to lanceolate-linear, 8–35 × 1–8 mm, reduced upward but increasing 2× in fruit, typically unequal (anisophyllous) with the bractlet subtending flower narrower, base often purple, pedicel straight, 1–7 mm long increasing 4× in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 5–8.5 mm across; receptacle extending above calyx as a short stalk (stipe), 1–1.2 mm long (fused to and surrounding gynophore); **calyx** 5-lobed, ovoid urn-shaped, at anthesis 8–10 × 2–3.5 mm becoming wider and more inflated in fruit, pilose and with stalked glandular hairs; tube 6.5–7 mm long, conspicuously 10-veined (ribbed), ribs purplish red, the furrows membranous whitish or pale green; lobes ascending, narrowly triangular, 2–2.5 × 0.5–0.8 mm, green with purplish red at tip and on margins above midpoint or purplish red; **petals** 5, weak fused at and < 1 mm below lobes and appendages, arising from stipe below stamens, spatulate, 9.5–10 mm long; basal portion pale yellow, 1-veined; limbs sometimes slightly twisted, ovate to obovate, 2.5–3.2 × 1.5–2.2 mm, entire or shallowly and irregularly dentate on margin above midpoint, light pink to purplish pink fading to pale pink or white, 1-veined at base, branching into 6–12 veins (greenish on lower surface), glabrous; appendages at base of each lobe 2, lanceolate, 1.5–1.7 mm long, acute to ± jagged or 2-toothed at tip, whitish; **stamens** 10, free, arising from rim of stipe, dimorphic, long stamens alternate with petals, short stamens opposite petals; filaments slender, 6–8.5 mm long (long stamens) and 2.5–4 mm long (short stamens), white, pubescent on basal 1.5–3 mm; anthers versatile, dithecal, oblong, 1–1.4 × 0.4–0.7 mm, dark purplish red, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale to light yellow; **pistil** 1, terminal on stipe, included; ovary superior, ± urn-shaped, 2.6–2.8 × 1.2–1.3 mm, glossy green, 3-chambered, each chamber with many ovules attached to center; styles 3,

ascending, narrowly lanceoloid, 1.3–1.5 mm long, white and sometimes with a narrow reddish purple band at base, papillate-stigmatic on inner face. **Fruit:** capsule, on a stalk and concealed by persistent calyx, 6-valved, dehiscent with tips of valves erect or arching, many-seeded, pear-shaped and weakly 3-lobed, 6.5–8 × 3.6–4.5 mm, straw-colored to grayish yellow and stiff-papery (chartaceous), valve tips 0.5–1.3 mm long, valves with fine, short, transverse wrinkles; stalk ca. 0.75 mm long. **Seed:** broadly kidney-shaped to ± D-shaped, notched at micropyle, 0.7–1.1 × 0.5–0.85 × 0.4–0.75 mm, brownish or blackish, ± frosted gray, longitudinally grooved or transversely convex on outer face, papillate, the papillae in interlocking files, transversely elongated bases.

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