

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Sisyrinchium minus – LEAST BLUE-EYED GRASS [Iridaceae]

Sisyrinchium minus Engelm. & A. Gray, LEAST BLUE-EYED GRASS. Annual, fibrous-rooted at base of shoot, lacking rhizome, several-stemmed at base, ascending, each shoot having a terminal inflorescence, in range to 25 cm tall; shoots with several leaves (some = bracts), strongly 2-ranked and flattened, each leaf sharply folded base to tip and appressed lengthwise along midrib (replicate) and with overlapping leaf bases (equitant), leaves oriented vertically, glabrous. **Stems:** compressed, to 3 mm wide, bulging at nodes and sometimes with purplish mark on bulge. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple and sheathing at base; sheath closed, to 12 mm long; blade linear, strap-shaped, and equally folded from base, to 90 × 2.5–4 mm, entire with membranous margin somewhat above sheath, acuminate at tip, parallel-veined with flat surfaces, keel not thickened, glabrous. **Inflorescence:** compound umbel-like cyme, strongly 2-dimensionally flattened side-to-side (rhipidium), to 3 nodes long, having a system of alternate distichous bracts, with an ascending leaflike primary bract at each node; inflorescence axis jointed, somewhat bent at nodes, at ultimate node having flowers arising from within a pair of bracts forming a narrowly ellipsoid involucre enclosing several unopened flowers + bractlets subtending pedicels, flowers within spathe alternate distichous, at anthesis each flower is exerted from the involucre and opening sequentially, glabrous; peduncle of spathe ascending, slender, < 50 mm long, wiry; **involucre** outer bract of involucre (spathe) closed at base 4 mm, leaflike blade to 25 mm long, sharply folded base to tip concealing most of inner bract, acuminate at tip, with membranous margins; inner bract hidden to midpoint of outer bract, where flowers exerted, open at base; bractlet subtending pedicel included, = a membranous sheath to 7 mm long, reduced to the youngest flower; pedicel with exerted flower from involucre, slender and flexible, green, initially exerted to the opposite side of developing fruits. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 5 mm across; **tepals** 6 in 2 whorls, forming a bell-shaped to funnel-shaped perianth, arising from green receptacle, ± monomorphic, obovate, ± 5.5 mm long including tail-like tip, 2 mm wide and 5-veined (outer whorl) and 1.5–1.7 mm wide and 3-veined (inner whorl), pale rose-purple with purple veins and having a yellow triangle at base, together forming a 6-pointed bright yellow star in center of perianth, each tepal with a midvein to midpoint and having several scattered nonglandular short hairs and stalked glandular hairs with minute heads; **stamens** 3, fused into tapered column narrowly lanceolate in outline, 2 × 0.6 mm (0.25 mm diameter at top), whitish, lower portion covered with yellowish glandular hairs and also scattered above midpoint; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, ± 0.7 mm long, bright yellow, longitudinally and outwardly dehiscent; pollen bright yellow; **pistil** 1, exerted to level of the top of anther sacs; ovary inferior, oblong 3-lobed, ± 1.5 × 0.9 mm, green, with scattered stalked glandular hairs, 3-chambered, each chamber with 12+ ovules in 2 stacks; style ± 2.3 mm long, white, with 3 erect stigma lobes at tip 0.4 mm long. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, pendent on slender and wiry, recurved pedicel, many-seeded, ± short club-shaped, < 5–5.5 × 2.5 mm, light brown, bulging at seeds. **Seed:** subspheroid with 1 side depressed, 0.5–0.8 mm long, minutely bumpy.

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