

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Symphotrichum ericoides var. *ericoides* – WHITE HEATH ASTER [Asteraceae]

Symphotrichum ericoides (L.) G. L. Nesom var. *ericoides*, WHITE HEATH ASTER.

Perennial herb, ± clumped, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, appearing 1-stemmed at base arising belowground, upper cauline leaves often with tufted axillary shoots with future flowering branch, spreading to ascending or decumbent from woody rhizome, in range 10–30 cm tall; shoot with basal and mostly cauline leaves stiff and with point at tip, short-hairy and without glandular hairs; rhizome horizontal and shallow, when young whitish, aging to 6 mm diameter, scales 2/3-sheathing, appressed, deltate, ± 2 mm, sparsely short-hairy; adventitious roots mostly from lower side of rhizome. **Stems:** cylindrical initially slender (< 1 mm diameter) becoming woody to 3 mm diameter, green and short-strigose with upward-pointing hairs aging with brown and gray periderm. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blades of basal leaves oblanceolate-linear, to 20 × 4 mm, of cauline leaves ± linear to narrowly lanceolate, 2–10+ × 0.7–1.4 mm, long-tapered and 1-veined or 3-veined from base, entire or short-ciliate on margins, acute to obtuse often with short hard, spinelike whitish point at tip, the tip often arching with point heading downward, in range sparsely short-strigose to glabrate. **Inflorescence:** head in terminal, paniclelike arrays, head radiate, 8–11 mm across, in range with mostly 14–16 ray flowers and 9–12 disc flowers, bracteate; peduncle having to 6 bracts along axis, bract oblong and half-cylindric, 1.3–3 mm long, somewhat fleshy, short-ciliate, with short spine at tip; involucre initially bell-shaped, 4–5 × 2.5–3 mm, phyllaries unequal, whitish below midpoint, short-ciliate, with short point at tip, outer phyllaries spreading, oblong-elliptic and half-cylindric, ca. 2 mm long, green above midpoint, middle phyllaries ca. 10, oblong, 1.9–3.5 mm long, whitish with green midvein and approaching tip, inner phyllaries 5–7, membranous, flat, 3.6–4.1 mm long; receptacle slightly domed, with crownlike teeth surrounding each ovary, 0.3–0.4 mm long, colorless. **Ray flower:** pistillate, bilateral, ca. 1 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** capillary bristles, ca. 3 mm long, white; **corolla** minutely (2–)3-toothed, ca. 5 mm long; tube cylindric ca. 1.5 mm long, white; limb spreading, elliptic, ± 3.5 × 0.7–1.1 mm, white (purplish); **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1, ca. 4 mm long; ovary inferior, funnel-shaped, ca. 0.8 × 0.35 mm, white, covered with ascending short hairs, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style ca. 3 mm long, white, 2-branched, the branches ca. 1.1 mm long. **Disc flower:** bisexual, radial, < 1 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** ca. 40 capillary bristles, subequal, (2–)3–3.5 mm long, white; **corolla** 5-lobed, 3–3.7 mm long; tube ± cylindric, 0.8–1.2 mm long, greenish to colorless; throat narrowly funnel-shaped, 1.8–2 mm long, colorless to yellowish, lobes acute, 0.4–0.6 mm long, colorless with light yellow veins and margins; **stamens** 5, fused at top of corolla tube; filaments 0.8–0.9 mm long, colorless; anthers fused in cylinder surrounding style, basifixed, dithecal, ca. 1.3 mm long including acute appendage at tip, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, 4 mm long; ovary inferior, funnel-shaped, ca. 0.8 × 0.35 mm, white, covered with ascending short hairs, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style 3.7–3.9 mm long, 2-branched, mostly white below branches, the branches appressed, slender, ca. 0.9 mm long, yellowish. **Fruits:** cypselae (achenes), cylindric, ca. 0.8 × 0.3 mm, pale brown and 10-stripped; pappus subequal, 3–3.5 mm long, tawny.

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