

## Vascular Plants of Williamson County

### *Tradescantia reverchonii* – TEXAS SPIDERWORT, REVERCHON SPIDERWORT [Commelinaceae]

*Tradescantia reverchonii* Bush, TEXAS SPIDERWORT, REVERCHON SPIDERWORT. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, thick fibrous-rooted, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, typically unbranched aboveground, branches ascending to suberect, in range to 50 cm tall; shoots with several basal leaves and at least 2 cauline leaves, densely soft-woolly on all exposed surfaces, having ascending pilose hairs to 7 mm long and longer cobwebby hairs appressed to axes as well as an undercoat of scattered, shorter pilose hairs, in range not appearing glandular-hairy; rhizomes with shallow horizontal axis with a series of vertical terminal portions for annual shoots, horizontal rhizome cylindrical, to 3 mm diameter, white, belowground scales on new shoot closed, acute at tip, with brown parallel veins; rhizomes to ca. 12 mm diameter, with 1 emergent shoot per branch, solid; adventitious roots nodal on horizontal rhizome and base of each new shoot, cylindrical on robust roots gradually thickened and fleshy to 5 mm toward the tip, to 90 mm long, reddish brown with densely tomentose. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 11 mm diameter, white and glabrous on lower stem and green and long-woolly (especially cobwebby appressed hairs) on exposed stem but also with scattered short-pilose hairs; internodes solid. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple with sheath; sheath closed but splitting downward (at least closed several mm on aged leaf), woolly-hairy and short-pilose; blade strap-shaped somewhat turned upward from midrib, in range mostly 170–250+ × 15–22 mm, violet on entire margins, gradually tapered to acuminate tip, parallel-veined with principal veins sunken on upper surface, surfaces with mixed long-pilose hairs and a sublayer of hairs < 1 mm long, stomates on both surfaces but much denser on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** condensed cyme, terminal and later axillary, subtended by 2 conspicuous, similar, leaflike bracts concealing flower buds and bases of pedicels, consisting to 2 cymes at top, together many-flowered with only 1 flower per inflorescence each day, having 2 parallel rows of flowers with the oldest flower of each cyme in the center and progressively younger flowers and buds toward both flanks, each flower at pollination on an erect pedicel and horizontally positioned, corolla ephemeral and lasting to 8 hours before shriveling and liquefying on top of ovary, pedicel soon becoming bent outward for fruit development, bracteate, densely pilose-hairy and in range lacking glandular hairs; peduncle stemlike and green, hairy, at its base having the uppermost cauline leaf with a closed sheath; bracts subtending condensed cymes 2, alternate distichous with tightly overlapping sheaths, with widely spreading blades, sheaths somewhat saclike, to 8 mm deep, blade leaflike but diminutive, to 70 × 8 mm and somewhat folded upward from midrib, violet on margins of sheath and blade, mostly with a uniform distribution of pilose hairs < 1 mm long but long-pilose on margins and often with some long pilose hairs on the sheath near the peduncle; bractlet subtending pedicel included and concealed in dense tomentum of flower buds, sheathing and membranous, commonly broadly acute at tip, colorless or with green panels; pedicel initially erect to suberect after wilting bending outward above midpoint, cylindrical, ca. 25 × 1.5 mm, white to midpoint and greenish above midpoint, densely pubescent with radiating long-pilose hairs to 8 mm long. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, in range 28–35 mm across; **sepals** 3, widely spreading, ovate and boat-shaped, < 10–13 × 3.8–4.6 mm, light green with membranous margins tapered to tip, 7-veined or 9-veined from base, outer (lower) green surface densely

pilose with ascending hairs to 5 mm long, lacking glandular hairs, inner surface glossy and glabrous; **petals** 3, broadly ovate, in range 13.5–20 × 11–16 mm, light blue-violet (light blue in sunlight), wavy on margins, acute-obtuse at tip; **stamens** in range 5, free; filaments flared at base and cylindric above, 4–6 mm long (1 sometimes > others), pale blue-violet to light violet approaching anther, with a brush of ascending beadlike hairs < 3–6.5 mm long arising from all filaments, hairs pale blue-violet formed to 2/3 length of filament, lower hairs > upper hairs in graduated series; anthers dorsifixed, conspicuously dithecal, ± butterfly-shaped, 1.5–1.9 × 2.2–2.5 mm, bright yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen bright yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, 3-sided, ca. 2.5 × 1.5 mm, translucent with stalked glandular hairs especially above midpoint, 3-chambered, each chamber with 2 ovules; style cylindric, ca. 4.5 × 0.3 mm, translucent (pale blue-purple), with pigmented stigma at top and at level of anthers. **Fruit:** not observed, capsule, loculicidal, dehiscent from top downward, 3-valved,

**Seed:** not observed.

A. C. Gibson