

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Tragia brevispica – SHORT-SPIKE NOSEBURN [Euphorbiaceae]

Tragia brevispica Engelm. & A. Gray, SHORT-SPIKE NOSEBURN. Perennial vine, twining, taprooted, not rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, ascending or trailing and climbing by twining on taller herbs with many coils of internodes; monoecious; shoots with only cauline leaves, leaves widely spaced on tough, slender stems, short-hairy and with some longer, stiff, stinging hairs, mildly stinging when handled; latex absent; taproot to 4 mm diameter. **Stems:** ridged, to 1.5 mm diameter, with 3 ridges descending from each leaf at node connected by ledge (stipule bases), internodes > leaves, 30–70 mm long, tough and mostly < 1 mm diameter, short-hirsute with straight hairs and puberulent. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate with pulvinus, with stipules; stipules 2, attached broadly at node, triangular-ovate, 2.5–3(–5) × 1–1.5(–2) mm, green, short-ciliate on margins, with a long stinging hair at tip, with to 5 veins at base; petiole pulvinus 1 mm long, axis above pulvinus strongly ridged, 3.5–15 mm long, often curved or somewhat twisted, short-hairy and puberulent with longer stinging hairs on upper side; blade triangular to arrow-shaped, 15–28 × 15–18 mm, subcordate to cordate at base, serrate on margins, broadly acute (obtuse) at tip, at base palmate with 3 or 5(7) veins above pinnately veined with principal veins somewhat raised on upper surface and raised on lower surface, having a conspicuous vein network, hirsute with some longer stinging hairs, the stinging hairs concentrated on basal lobes and close to blade margins. **Inflorescence:** racemelike, 1 per node opposite petiole (not axillary), of 1(–2) pistillate flower on lower portion and several staminate flowers on upper portion, bracteate, pubescent; peduncle mostly widely spreading, ridged, to 10 mm long but shorter at anthesis of the first flower, puberulent with other short hairs; bractlet subtending pedicel of pistillate flower at first fork = 2 stipules but 1 often early-abscised, appressed, ovate symmetric or slightly asymmetric, ca. 1.5 × 1 mm, green, short-ciliate and somewhat jagged on margins; bractlet subtending pedicel of each staminate flower ovate, the lowest one stipulelike but cupped, ca. 1 mm long decreasing upward; pedicel of pistillate flower strongly ridged, to 3 mm long, axis below staminate flowers more slender than pedicel of pistillate flower; pedicel of staminate flower short– < 1 mm long, short-hairy. **Staminate flower:** radial, ca. 0.7 mm across; **perianth (calyx)** deeply (3–)4-lobed, fused only at base; lobes obovate, ca. 0.7 mm long, green, minute-hairy on outer (lower) surface; **stamens** (3–)4, opposite calyx lobes, scarcely fused at base; filaments ca. 0.2 mm long, green, glabrous; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.35–0.4 mm long, yellow-green, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** absent. Pistillate flower: radial, 3–3.5 mm across; **perianth (calyx and corolla)** 6-lobed, green; tube widely spreading, 0.3–0.4 mm long; lobes in 2 whorls, at anthesis ascending, ovate, ca. 2 mm long, minutely-ciliate on margins and acute at tip, outer lobes 1.3–1.4 mm wide, inner lobes 0.7–0.8 mm long; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, strongly 3-lobed, ca. 1 mm long, often purple, with spheroid lobes concealed by stiff, white, stinging hairs ca. 1 mm long, 3-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule attached to center; style 1 deeply 3-branched, in range fused ca. 0.25 mm at base, about 1.2 mm long, the branches green with curved stigmatic tips aging purple, minute-strigose on branches and papillate on stigmas. **Fruit:** schizocarp, of 3 dry, 1-seeded mericarps, before separating ca. 7 mm across, mericarps spheric, 3.2–3.6 mm, hard and thick-walled, aging light brown with many

stinging hairs. **Seed:** lacking caruncle, spheric, in range ± 2.5 mm, mottled black and brown, with linear hilum ca. 1 mm long on inner side.

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