

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Tridens albescens – WHITE TRIDENS [Poaceae]

Tridens albescens (Vasey) Wooton & Standl., WHITE TRIDENS. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, not rosetted, cespitose (bunchgrass), several–many-stemmed at base, ascending, in range to 80 cm tall; shoots with several basal leaves and to 3 cauline leaves, glabrous; rhizomes vertical and knotty with crowded nodes; adventitious roots on rhizome. **Stems (culms):** cylindrical, to 2.5 mm diameter (internode) to 4.5 mm (node), exposed, often bent at nodes, (geniculate); internodes hollow. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll 2-keeled triangular, to 40 mm long, keels winglike ca. 0.5 mm long and densely short-ciliate; sheath open and scarcely 360° at node, of cauline leaves < internode, smooth and finely striped (many closely spaced veins, without lobes (auricles) at top; ligule densely ciliate to 1 mm long; blade linear, < 100–390 × (1–)3–7.5 mm (absent on the earliest basal leaves), sparsely minutely toothed on margins base-to-tip, long-tapered at tip, parallel-veined with veins raised on both surfaces and midrib not present, upper surface bluish green and minutely textured especially along veins, lower surface striped bright green totally without hairs and teeth. **Inflorescence:** spikelets, in terminal panicle, panicle ± condensed with ascending, appressed primary branches, 80–200+ × 5–13 mm, primary branches 1 per node along straight rachis, alternate and overlapping, to 60 mm long decreasing upward, each with several–many spikelets, spikelets 1 per node, spikelet with 4–11 bisexual florets, bracteate, not awned, appearing glabrous; peduncle cylindrical, upper portion exposed above flag leaf; stalk of spikelet ascending, somewhat flattened, mostly ca. 1 mm long (terminal solitary spikelet to 3.5 mm long), glossy green, not scabrous. **Spikelet:** initially ellipsoid growing to ovate in outline compressed side-to-side, 4–10 mm long, breaking above glumes and between florets; **glumes** 2, subequal, keeled and boat-shaped, 4–5.3 mm long × 1.7 mm (lower glume) and 2.1 mm (upper glume), 1-veined, membranous with green keel aging papery, tip colorless and minutely scabrous; rachilla with colorless hairs < 0.5 mm long, internodes to 0.35 mm long; **lemma** with short extension of midvein, body cupped-obovate, in range (1.7–)3–4.5 × 2–2.4 mm, 3-veined, membranous aging paper and above midpoint often pink to rose, minutely jagged on upper margin and shallowly notched at tip, veins raised and not converging at tip with lateral veins 0.3–0.4 mm from margin, minutely scabrous at tip and on point to 0.4 mm long; **palea** in outline ovate and flexed away from lemma, 2-veined, 2-keeled strongly, 2–2.5 mm long and < lemma, folded margins overlapping. **Flower:** bisexual (terminal florets sterile or immature); **perianth (lodicules)** 2, fan-shaped shallowly notch, 0.3–0.35 mm long, translucent; **stamens** 3, free, included; filaments ca. 0.7 mm long, colorless; anthers basifixed, dithecal, in range 0.5 mm long, whitish and rose, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white; **pistil** 1, included, 1.8–2 mm long; ovary superior, obovoid, 0.45–0.5 mm long, translucent but greenish at base, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, spaced on top of ovary, lower portion colorless, upper portion conspicuously branched, purple-red. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), dispersed as a floret tightly enclosed within palea and lemma + a rachilla segment; achene ellipsoid rounded on back and somewhat concave on other face, 1.3–1.8 × 0.65–0.8 mm, whitish.

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