

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Zeltnera beyrichii – ROCK CENTAURY [Gentianaceae]

Zeltnera beyrichii (Torrey & A. Gray) G. Mans., ROCK CENTAURY. Annual, taprooted, not rosetted, several-stemmed at base. with erect to suberect branches from base and a branched, flat-topped terminal inflorescence, in range to 20 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, glabrous. **Stems:** 4-sided, to 2 mm diameter, narrowly ridged along angles descending for 1 internode from a pair of ledges at node, tough, light green. **Leaves:** opposite decussate, simple, sessile, without stipules; blade linear, 5–25 × 1.2–2 mm, dull, entire (not inrolled), acute at tip, 1-veined with midrib raised on lower surface. **Inflorescence:** compound cyme, terminal, 20+-flowered per shoot, open but flowers overlapping at top of canopy, often with 5+ orders of branching, bracteate, glabrous; axes never straight, forking at every node, 4-sided with axes stemlike with 4 ridges; bracts subtending cymes and bractlets subtending flowers in pairs, spreading, leaflike, < 20 × < 1 mm decreasing upward, ≥ internode; bractlet subtending pedicel paired with bract subtending fork, equal, linear, 6–7 × 0.5 mm, < pedicel; pedicel 4-sided and 4-ridged, 6.5–7.5 × 0.6 mm increasing in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, in range ca. 24 mm across; **calyx** (4–)5-lobed, fused only at base, ca. 10 mm long; lobes subequal, appressed to corolla tube, acuminate-linear and keeled, 9–10.5 mm long increasing in fruit, green, glabrous, adherent to corolla tube, persistent; **corolla** (4–)5-lobed, trumpet-shaped (salverform), exserted 3–3.5 mm above calyx, white in bud; tube cylindric, white, with fine veins, delicate and stretched with ovary expansion, persistent; throat broadly funnel-shaped, ± 2 mm long, 0.8 mm wide at base, ca. 3 mm wide and white at orifice; lobes widely spreading, narrowly ovate, ca. 12 × 4.5 mm, in range rose or pink to pale pink (white) and lighter on lower surface, throat + lobes forming white pentagonal pattern below rose or pink, entire, acute at tip, glabrous; **stamens** (4–)5, fused to base of corolla throat (at level of top of ovary), alternate with corolla lobes, exserted; filaments 9–10 mm long, decurrent portion yellowish within tube, free portion yellowish at base but white above, channeled to midpoint, glabrous; anthers versatile, dithecal, 4.5–5 mm long with short appendage at tip prior to dehiscing, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent becoming tightly helical (720°) and much shorter after dehiscing; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1, 24–26 mm long, exserted 1 mm > stamens; ovary superior, narrowly lanceoloid, 7–7.5 × 1 mm, glossy green but mottled, 1-chambered and longitudinally grooved over each placenta, the 2 placenta intruding with numerous ovules; style straight and erect, thin, channeled approaching stigmas; stigmas formed as 2 short, broad lobes on fan-shaped, fleshy top of style, light yellow aging darker, papillate on upper (inner) surface. **Fruit:** capsule, septicidal, dehiscent by 2 valves, many-seeded, scarious, narrowly fusiform-cylindric, 10–12 × 2–2.5 mm, dehiscing most of its length, tips of valves straight. **Seed:** D-shaped, 0.4 × 0.3 mm, dark brown, conspicuously netlike.

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