

Vascular Plants of Williamson County

Pluchea odorata – SWEETSCENT, SALT MARSH FLEABANE, SHRUBBY CAMPHORWEED
[Asteraceae]

Pluchea odorata (L.) Cass., SWEETSCENT, SALT MARSH FLEABANE, SHRUBBY CAMPHORWEED. Annual or perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, several-stemmed at base, ascending to erect, 25–120 cm tall; shoots short-villous and glandular-hairy, the glandular hairs minute, colorless, spheric and short-stalked to sessile, strongly spicy; rhizomes yellowish brown. **Stems:** cylindric, to 4 mm diameter. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, short-petiolate, without stipules; petiole < 6 mm long, ± winged; blade ovate to broadly elliptic, 40–135 × 25–70 mm, broadly tapered at base, shallowly serrate with short-pointed teeth on margins, acute to obtuse at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins raised on lower surface, upper surface sparsely short-villous and glandular with sessile to subsessile glandular hairs in shallow pits, lower surface more densely hairy. **Inflorescence:** heads, in terminal, paniclelike arrays of many heads, ± flat-topped, head discoid, ca. 4 mm across, with many, slender, pistillate peripheral flowers and < 16 staminate central flowers, bracteate, tomentose and oily glandular-hairy; bract subtending peduncle or branchlet leaflike, 3–12 mm long, decreasing upward, the bract subtending peduncle typically absent; peduncle 2.5–7 mm long, tomentose and oily-glandular; **involucre** ± U-shaped at anthesis with top narrower than base but expanding in fruit, 4.5–6.5 × 3.5–4.5 mm, phyllaries ± 25 in several series, outer phyllaries acute-ovate, green sometimes with lavender margins near tip, sometimes keeled, tomentose and glandular-hairy, inner phyllaries lanceolate or oblong to linear, green with lavender approaching tip, sometimes with green midvein, villous to glabrous and ciliate at acute tip; receptacle slightly domed or flat, without bractlets (paleae). **Peripheral flower:** pistillate, radial, slightly exserted beyond involucre, ca. 0.4 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** of 12–15 capillary bristles in 1 whorl, bristles ± 4.5 mm long, whitish; **corolla** 3–4-lobed, narrowly cylindric, 4.5 × 0.1 mm, white with rose-pink to purple lobes, glabrous, lacking glands; lobes minute; **stamens** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, narrowly inversely conic-fusiform, 1 × 0.3 mm, pubescent and minutely glandular with spheroidal glands, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style slender, 4–4.7 mm long, 2-branched, the branches ± 0.9 mm; stigmas linear, lavender, minutely papillate. **Central flower:** functionally staminate, appearing bisexual but style branches undivided and sterile, radial, slightly exserted beyond involucre, ca. 1 mm across; **calyx (pappus)** of 15–20 capillary bristles in 1 whorl, bristles ± 4.5 mm long, whitish; **corolla** 5-lobed, cylindric, 4.5–5 mm long, greenish white or with upper portion rose to purple, with conspicuous colorless spheric glands on upper throat and lobes; tube cylindric, ca. 2.5 × 0.5 mm; throat ± 0.7 mm long, expanding to 0.7 mm wide, glabrous; lobes erect; **stamens** 5, fused to midpoint on corolla tube, partially exserted; filaments fused midway to tube, ± 1.6 mm long; anthers fused into cylindric surrounding style, basifixed, dithecal, ± 1.9 mm long + short, slender tails at base, pinkish or purple, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen whitish; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, inversely conic, 1 mm long, sterile; style exserted, stout, undivided at tip, exposed upper style pink-rose and papillate. **Fruits:** cypselae, narrow, 4–5-ribbed, 1–1.2 mm long, brown with tannish ribs and base, strongly short-strigose and with short, viscid glandular hairs; pappus bristles ± 13, 3.5–4(–7) mm long, tannish at base, white approaching tip.

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