

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
***Sporobolus vaginiflorus* – POVERTY DROPSEED [Poaceae]**

Sporobolus vaginiflorus (Torrey) Alph. Wood (syn. *S. vaginiflorus* var. *vaginiflorus*, not including *S. vaginiflorus* var. *ozarkanus*), POVERTY DROPSEED. Annual, obscurely rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, spreading to ascending, shoots < 40 cm tall; shoots with basal leaves and several cauline leaves, several of the lower basal leaves with a reduced, triangular blades; adventitious roots at nodes. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 1.5 mm diameter, glabrous, not glaucous. **Leaves:** alternate distichous, simple with sheath; prophyll membranous, triangular, flat, 2-keeled and folded, to 5 mm long, minutely ciliate along keels, blunt-acute to minutely notched at tip; sheath somewhat glaucous, sometimes with several long hairs approaching ligule; ligule doubly short-hairy, 0.1–0.3 mm long; collar < 1 mm long, white, ciliate on margins having hairs with enlarged bases (pustulate); blade flat-linear long-tapered to base, (2–)70–330(–490) × 0.6–2.8(–4) mm, minutely scabrous sometimes with sparse, pustulate hairs to 3.5 mm long near base on margins, pinnately veined with closely spaced, fine veins raised on both surfaces and midrib raised on lower surface; upper surface short-strigose in furrows and often with pustulate hairs to 3 mm long near collar or widely scattered, somewhat glaucous, on flag leaf somewhat scabrous, lower surface having whitish veins with microhairs along veins, . **Inflorescence:** spikelet, in terminal and axillary, contacted panicle with appressed primary branches lacking branchlets, in range 20–190 mm long, crudely cylindrical, spikelet with 1 bisexual floret, bracteate, essentially glabrous with scabrous axes; rachis slender and ± twisted and wavy, to 0.7 mm diameter, minutely scabrous along green veins; lateral branches to 18 mm long, scabrous; stalks of spikelets variable, 1–7 mm long. **Spikelet:** of 4 bracts, all ca. the same length, breaking above glumes; **glumes** 2, unequal, 1-veined, green, keeled, blunt at tip, scabrous, lower glume 2–4.5 × 1 mm, aging purplish red and glaucous, upper glume 3–5.3 × 1.5 mm, minutely scabrous from above midpoint; breaking above glumes; **lemma** 2.5–4.8 mm long, 1-veined, often blushed purplish red, scabrous along midvein, short-strigose below midpoint; **palea** similar to lemma, in range 3–3.8 mm long, finely 2-veined, veins green, aging blushed purplish red, scabrous along midvein, short-strigose below midpoint. **Flower:** **perianth (lodicule)** 2, shallowly 3-lobed, 0.6 × 0.8–1 × 0.35 mm, translucent, with convex cells; **stamens** 3, free; filaments exerted from midpoint of spikelet, threadlike, 2.5–3 mm long, white; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 2.2–2.6 mm long, crimson on yellowish, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, ovoid, 0.35 mm long, light green, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 2, 1.8–2 mm long, colorless, lower portion ca. 0.35 mm long, upper stigmatic portion shrublike. **Fruit:** achene (caryopsis), dispersed hidden within lemma and palea, oblong-ellipsoid, mostly 2–2.7 × 0.7–0.9 mm, translucent slightly brownish with a conspicuous, dark brown, oblique embryo, nipplelike at tip, not gelatinous when wetted.

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