

Athysanus Greene

Athysanus pusillus (Hooker) Greene, WINGLESS LACEPOD. Annual, short-lived, taprooted, rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, ascending to erect, 3–20(–35) cm tall; shoots slender, with basal and cauline leaves, pubescent, the hairs < 0.5 mm long, branched and short-stalked with 2–5 arms (unbranched). **Stems:** cylindric, < 1 mm diameter, purplish at base, conspicuously pubescent. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, short-petiolate below and sessile above, without stipules; petiole < 0.5 mm long, purplish; blade spatulate, obovate, or roundish to elliptic or ovate, 2–10(–30) × 1.5–4(–10) mm, entire or inconspicuously dentate on margins, acute to obtuse at tip, obscurely veined, with evenly scattered hairs. **Inflorescence:** raceme, terminal, > 15-flowered, open flowers not overtopping buds, lacking bracts and bractlets; axis fine-wiry, green, with branched and unbranched hairs below and nearly glabrous above; pedicel slender, at anthesis 1.5–2 mm long increasing 2–3× and arching in fruit, with branched hairs (glabrous). **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 1–1.5 mm across; **sepals** 4, erect, elliptic-lanceolate, 0.7–0.9 × 0.3 mm, greenish with white margins to purplish with lavender margins, glabrous or sparsely pubescent, deciduous; **petals** 4, erect, not clawed, oblanceolate to narrowly obovate, 0.8–1.5 mm long, white; **stamens** 6, ± equal; filaments 0.5–0.6 mm long, colorless, arched inward; anthers ± basifixed, dithecal, 0.1 mm long, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **nectaries** 4, tiny, greenish, between stamen bases; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, lenticular, tiny, green, bearing ascending, hooked hairs, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; style short, stout; stigma capitate. **Fruit:** siliqua (silicle), indehiscent, 1-seeded, fruit body lenticular and roundish, 1.2–2.5 mm diameter, slightly notched at tip, with radiating hooks 0.2 mm long from margin and seed chamber, often purplish along edge, not veiny, wing absent; beak tiny, barrel-shaped. **Seed:** oval-lenticular, 0.9 × 0.6 mm, light brown; not mucilaginous when wet. Late January–late March.

Native. A delicate annual, inconspicuous and seldom seen during late winter and early spring on grassy, open slopes and rocky outcrops of SMM, but in certain years locally abundant following a wet winter or a set of heavy, late winter storms. *Athysanus pusillus* superficially resembles, and was originally described as, a miniature *Thysanocarpus* (lacepod), having very small white flowers, but *Athysanus* instead has hooks on a wingless, indehiscent lenticular fruit. In range our specimens typically do not seem to exhibit 1-sided inflorescences, as described elsewhere.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson