

Datisca L.

Datisca glomerata (C. Presl) Baill, DURANGO ROOT. Perennial herb, robust, winter-dormant, several-stemmed at base, with numerous flowering lateral shoots, ascending to erect, 80–200+ cm tall; androdioecious (= plants with only staminate flowers and plants with only bisexual flowers); shoots leafy, mostly glabrous but sparsely glandular-puberulent with club-shaped hairs on the youngest growth. **Stems:** shallowly ridged, to 12 mm diameter, with 3 ridges descending from each leaf; pith wide, white, with internodes and nodes becoming hollow. **Leaves:** helically alternate (sometimes appearing opposite to whorled at plant base), deeply pinnately dissected with an odd number of principal lobes or sometimes 3-foliolate (large leaves), petiolate, without stipules; petiole channeled, 5–55 mm long, sparsely glandular-pubescent; blade 30–250 mm long, terminal leaflet or lobe narrowly ovate and subdivided into triangular lobes, serrate to serrate-dentate on margins, acute to acuminate at tips, pinnately veined with principal veins sunken on upper surface and raised on lower surfaces, surfaces and principal veins glandular-pubescent; lateral leaflets or lobes narrowly lanceolate, to 100 mm long, divided into triangular lobes primarily on trailing edge, narrowly acute to acute at tips. **Inflorescences:** axillary clusters, 1–9-flowered, either all staminate flowers or all bisexual flowers, inconspicuously bracteate; bractlet subtending staminate flower minute, hairlike, bractlet subtending bisexual flower 0.5–1.5 mm long, sometimes becoming leaflike and \pm 10 mm long in fruit; pedicel of staminate flower 3–6(–20) mm long and pale green, bisexual flowers subsessile or with short pedicel. **Staminate flower:** \pm radial, ca. 8 mm across; receptacle platelike; **sepals** 4–6(–10) produced on edge of receptacle, unequal, triangular to ovate, 0.3–1.8 mm long, green, acute at tip, spreading or curved upward between anthers; **petals** absent; **stamens** 5–11(–20); filaments mostly spreading (ascending for central anthers), stubby, $<$ 0.5 mm long, green; anthers basifixed, dithecal, narrowly oblong, 3.3–4.5 \times 0.8 mm, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** absent. **Bisexual flower:** radial, protogynous; **sepals** 3–4, awl-shaped, 0.7–2.5 \times 0.3–0.6 mm, green, acute at tip; **petals** absent; **stamens** (1–)3–4; filaments stubby, $<$ 0.2 mm long; anthers basifixed, dithecal, narrowly oblong, 3–4 \times 0.8 mm, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **pistil** 1; ovary inferior, triangular-ovoid to quadrangular-ovoid or \pm urn-shaped, $<$ 2 mm long, 1-chambered with numerous ovules in 6 or 8 vertical lines; styles 3–4, opposite sepals, threadlike, 3–7 mm long, yellowish, 2-branched, base 1–2 mm long, the branches 2–5 mm long, papillate-hairy and stigmatic entire length. **Fruit:** capsule, dehiscent by 3–4-radiate openings at top among styles, many-seeded, long urn-shaped, 7.5–10 \times 4.5–5.5 mm, 3-ribbed and 6-veined or 4-ribbed and 8-veined. **Seed:** ellipsoid to oblong, 0.7–1 \times 0.4–0.5 mm, golden buff to golden brown, thickly netlike with pits in longitudinal rows. Early May–early September.

Native. Perennial herb commonly encountered in shaded riparian woodland growing on margins of seasonally dry creek beds. *Datisca glomerata* forms its long, leafy shoots each spring, and the plant maintains large leaf area throughout summer drought by drawing on deep moisture available in the creek bed. Durango root is androdioecious, but has not been carefully studied in the wild; staminate plants occur in range but are fewer than are individuals with bisexual flowers. The canopy of each hermaphroditic plant forms axillary

clusters of bisexual flowers at every node; the flowers have long stigmatic style branches and copious pollen for wind pollination. Fruit set is excellent, fertile seeds per fruit are numerous, and flower cluster are often hundreds per plants, so that this species produces an enormous number of tiny, light seeds, which are easily dispersed along creeks.

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