

Lepidium L. PEPPERGRASS

Lepidium didymum L., LESSER SWINE CRESS. Annual, taprooted, in range often rosetted, several-many-stemmed at base, matlike with basal branches radiating in all directions, prostrate to decumbent (ascending), 5–18(–50) cm tall; shoots nearly glabrous, the hairs unbranched, ± foul-smelling from yellowish myrosin cells (sulphur-containing chemicals; visible on fresh materials at high magnification). **Stems:** cylindric, to 4 mm in diameter, green to purplish. **Leaves:** helically alternate, < 50–130 mm long, pinnately dissected with several–15 lobes, the lobes further divided or not, petiolate to subsessile, without stipules; petiole hemi-cylindric to U-shaped in ×-section, to 45 mm long, typically with several long hairs on each edge near base; blade oblong to ovate, primary lobes alternate to subopposite, asymmetric, to 15 mm long, ultimate lobes elliptic to oblong, acute at tips but initially with 1–several hairs on tip, pinnately veined, glabrous. **Inflorescence:** raceme, probably axillary but often appearing opposite a leaf with a new stem forming between them, 10–70 mm long, > 40-flowered, flat-topped with open flowers overtopping buds, lacking bracts; axis glabrous or with some unbranched hairs, sometimes purplish; pedicel ascending, slender, at anthesis 1–1.5 mm long increasing 2× and spreading in fruit. **Flower:** bisexual, slightly bilateral, ca. 1 mm across, nonshowy; **sepals** 4, cupped-ovate, 0.6–0.8 mm long, green with narrow membranous margins, sometimes aging purplish at tip, glabrous to sparsely hairy with 1 sepal having 1–several ascending hairs in bud, abscising during fruit development; **petals** 0(4), if present 0.8 × 0.4 mm, white, lacking claw; **stamens** 2 fertile (opposite sepals and ovary septum), 4 sterile (lacking anthers) with 2 flanking each fertile stamen; filaments arched, 0.3–0.4 mm long, whitish, of fertile stamens bulbous at base and strongly arched toward stigma, of sterile stamens narrowly triangular and ascending; anthers basifixed, dithecal, ± 0.15 mm long, pale yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen pale yellow; **nectaries** absent; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, distinctly 2-lobed, to 0.5 mm long, cordate at base and notched at tip, compressed ⊥ septum, green, glabrous, surface becoming somewhat beaded, 2-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style absent; stigma within notch, ca. 0.25 mm diameter, papillate. **Fruit:** siliqua (silicle), schizocarpic, compressed and deeply 2-lobed, 1.7–2 mm × 3 mm × 1.2 mm thick, splitting apart from septum into 2 D-shaped, 1-seeded segments, segment surfaces initially beaded but becoming netlike as cells dry. Late October–mid-June.

Naturalized. Annual growing as an occasional weed throughout the range in gardens and waste areas, along roadsides and trails, and sometimes thriving even in the center of a hard-packed dirt road or parking lot where few species can survive. *Lepidium didymum* was formerly known as *Coronopus didymus*. The racemes are neither terminal nor axillary in the classic sense. Flowers are minute, have only two fertile stamens, and typically lack petals; this species is a selfer with anthers touching the stigma. Its fruits are reminiscent of the typical fruits of peppergrass, which are notched only at the tip and rounded at the base, whereas lesser swine cress has notches at the tip and the base. Moreover, seeds of *L. didymum* do not separate from the fruit wall, as they do in most species of *Lepidium*.
B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson