

Oxalis L. OXALIS, WOOD-SORREL

Oxalis corniculata L., CREEPING LADY'S-SORREL. Perennial herb, ± fleshy taprooted, stolon-bearing, creeping and rooting at nodes of stolons, to 25 cm tall, to 40 cm long; shoots soft-hairy. **Stems:** cylindric, slender but tough, to 1.5 mm diameter, green but often turning red or brownish, strigose. **Leaves:** helically alternate, palmately 3-foliolate, at night or during water stress with leaflets moving downward and folding upward along leaflet midribs, long-petiolate, with stipules; stipules 2, fused to petiole base, semi-obovate to inversely triangular, 1.5–2 × 0.5–0.8 mm, ± membranous to winglike, green aging brown or purple, tapered at base, rounded or truncate at tip, hairy; petiole 15–90 mm long, with a conspicuous constriction near top of stipules, with somewhat bulbous pulvinus where leaflets attached; petiolules ca. 0.5 mm long, with red at junction of petiolule and leaflet base, soft-hairy; blades of leaflets broadly heart-shaped, 4–15 × 8–20 mm, length < width, broadly tapered to rounded at base, entire and ciliate on margins, deeply lobed at tip, pinnately veined with midrib raised on lower surface, upper surface glabrous, lower surface ± pilose on outer 1/2 of outer 2 leaflets and along midrib on central leaflet.

Inflorescence: umbel-like cyme, axillary, (1–)2–5(–10) flowered; peduncle ascending, 7–70+ mm long, with pulvinus at base; bracts (bractlets) subtending each pedicel 2, in series opposite decussate and appearing congested at top of peduncle, narrowly lanceolate or lanceolate-linear to narrowly triangular, 1–4.5 × 0.3–0.5 mm long, decreasing upward, green, at least the first 2 persistent, hairy; pedicel cylindric, 4–12 mm long increasing in fruit, green but becoming reddish or brownish, with pulvinuslike swelling at base and tip, ascending or becoming deflexed by pulvinus, strigose. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 8–13 mm across; receptacle broad and thick; **sepals** 5, overlapping at base, free but appearing fused a base (= receptacle), ascending at anthesis and in fruit, ± equal, lanceolate to oblong or oblanceolate, 2.5–4.5 × 1–1.5 mm, green, acute to obtuse and with a tuft of hairs at tip, short-strigose on outer surface, 5-veined or 7-veined; **corolla** deeply 5-lobed; tube 1.2–2 mm long, the widest at base with 5 toothlike attachments to receptacle (i.e. with 5 deltate openings), with a bulge above each tooth, colorless and greenish at base to light yellow approaching lobes; lobes spreading, oblanceolate, 3.5–7.5 mm long, light yellow to vivid yellow, sometimes with 2 red spots on each lower lobe; **stamens** 10 in 1 whorl fused into a column surrounding pistil; tube membranous, 1–1.5 mm long, filaments alternately long and short, the short ones opposite corolla tube attachments, 1–1.5 mm long, the longer ones opposite openings in corolla tube, 2.5–3 mm long, flat and membranous becoming light yellow approaching anthers; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, oblong, 0.3–0.5 mm long, vivid yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **nectaries** 5, bumps on base of staminal tube below each short filament, producing copious nectar (escaping through openings to form a nectar pool between sepals and corolla); **pistil** 1, = the longest stamens; ovary superior, columnar with 5 rounded ribs, 1.5–2.4 mm long, green, ribs slightly bulging from ovules, the basal 1 mm glabrous, above midpoint white-villous, 5-chambered with 8–12 ovules per chamber; styles 5, ascending at anthesis becoming erect, 1–1.4 mm long, green but white-villous; stigmas 5, capitate, only slightly wider than style, papillate. **Fruit:** capsule, loculicidal, dehiscent by 5 valves, to 50-seeded, erect, columnar and strongly 5-angled, 6–25 × 3–3.5 mm, short-strigose; receptacle hemispheric beneath fruit. **Seed:** with aril, discoid-ovate (excluding aril), 1.2–1.5 × 1–1.1 mm, very compressed,

acute at tip and obtuse at hilum, reddish, transversely 5–7-ridged, often with bumps along ridges, surfaces minutely papillate; before drying aril covering seed fleshy, ellipsoid, 1.5–1.8 mm long, milky-translucent, smooth. January–December.

Naturalized. A widespread perennial weed found in disturbed sites and along roads and parking lots, as well as in lawns and gardens throughout the range. As with other forms of wood-sorrel, *Oxalis corniculata* has the characteristic 3-foliolate leaves that exhibit sleep movement by drooping and folding along leaflet midribs at nighttime and then recovering the next day. The flower can self, but also produces copious nectar. Seeds of *O. corniculatus* are covered with a fleshy aril, adapted for animal dispersal.

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