

Lepidium latipes Hooker, DWARF PEPPERGRASS. Annual, taprooted, rosetted, 1–several-stemmed at base, with each branch terminating in inflorescence, decumbent, in range 3–8 cm tall, some individuals height < width; shoots with basal leaves and cauline leaves, green, puberulent with unbranched short hairs, the hairs straight and stiff. **Stems:** cylindrical, to 2 mm diameter, densely puberulent. **Leaves:** helically alternate, mostly several-lobed (unlobed), to 130 mm long, petiolate to sessile, without stipules; petiole linear and flat, to $60 \times 1\text{--}2$ mm, flared at base, sparsely puberulent-ciliate on margins; blade $25\text{--}70 \times 1\text{--}5.5$ mm, the axis straplike to 5.5 mm wide but width not uniform, the widest where lobes present or above lobes approaching tip, sometimes cupped upward along midrib; lobes opposite or irregularly alternate, ascending to spreading, narrowly triangular, to 15 mm long, entire on lobes and blade margins and sometimes sparsely puberulent-ciliate, acute to acuminate at tip often with terminal short hair, pinnately veined with midrib raised on lower surface, typically glabrous. **Inflorescence:** condensed raceme, terminal, many-flowered, with developing fruits conspicuously overtopping flowers and buds (buds appearing in a depressed center), ca. 10 mm across, puberulent; peduncle at anthesis short increasing to 5 mm in fruit, densely stiff-puberulent; axis puberulent, internodes < 1 mm long and not increasing in fruit; bractlets subtending pedicels absent; pedicel at anthesis short then ascending and increasing to 3.2 mm long in fruit aging flattened top-to-bottom and slightly winged, puberulent. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, ca. 1 mm across; **sepals** 4, slightly dimorphic, ovate to obovate, $\pm 1.2 \times 0.7$ mm (outer sepals) and $\pm 0.8 \times 0.4$ mm (inner sepals), greenish with membranous margins, keeled, coarsely puberulent on midrib, some sepals appressed to developing fruit; **petals** 4, obovate and weakly clawed, at anthesis $\pm 0.7 \times 0.3\text{--}0.4$ mm increasing 2–3 \times , green surrounded by white, minutely toothed on margins above midpoint, appressed against developing fruit; **stamens** 4, 0.3–0.5 mm long; filaments 0.15 mm long, whitish; anthers dithecal, 0.15 mm long, light yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen light yellow; **nectaries** 4, minute; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, strongly 2-lobed, U-shaped in outline and flattened, ca. 1×0.7 mm, sinus 0.5 mm deep, compressed \perp to septum, minutely puberulent, 2-chambered, each chamber with 1 ovule; style absent; stigma at base of sinus, minute. **Fruit:** siliqua (silicle), dehiscent by 2 valves, 2-seeded, ovate to elliptic with 2 erect, flat lobes, ca. $5\text{--}5.5 \times 3\text{--}3.3$ mm, dull tannish but often purple or purplish on margins and often faces, with a conspicuous midline (septum), flattened (not inflated), conspicuously veiny, minutely puberulent; lobes acute-ovate to acute narrowly triangular, sinus to 2 mm long, lobes sometimes overlapping. **Seed:** compressed-ovoid with folded embryo evident, $1.6\text{--}1.7 \times 1$ mm, dull brown; very gelatinous when wetted. Late March–late April.

Native. Annual first discovered in range by Carl Wishner from a vernal pool-like swale microhabitat in cracking clay on the edge of SMMNRA Cheeseboro (SH). *Lepidium latipes* is still known only from that general locality growing with *Microseris douglasii* subsp. *tenella* and *Hordeum depressum*, but it only appears in rare years (e.g., 2010), so the habitat of these three species should be looked for during early spring after abundant seasonal rainfall. Little is known about *Lepidium latipes* in our range, except that it has incredibly tiny flowers, and yet identification is relatively easy because it forms

distinctive, often purple, veiny fruits with conspicuous terminal lobes on the seed chambers. If recognized, our populations fit variety *latipes*.

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