

Solanum americanum Miller, LITTLE WHITE NIGHTSHADE, AMERICAN BLACK NIGHTSHADE. Annual to short-lived perennial, taprooted, several-stemmed at base, ascending or spreading, 25–80 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, arching short-strigose and minutely glandular-hairy on young growth. **Stems:** ridged to narrowly winged on young stems, to 10 mm diameter, with usually 2 ridges per internode descending from each leaf, often reddish (especially ridges), having some enlarged hairs with swollen bases. **Leaves:** helically alternate, simple, petiolate, without stipules; petiole winged, to 45 mm long, the wings grading into internodal ridges; blade ovate to broadly lanceolate, in range 15–70 × 7–40 mm, thin, long-tapered to broadly tapered and ± symmetric at base, typically coarsely serrate to weakly lobed (subentire) on margins, acute to acuminate at tip, pinnately veined with principal veins raised slightly on lower surface, with scattered hairs on surfaces and more densely short-strigose along veins, upper surface commonly becoming glabrescent. **Inflorescence:** umbel-like cyme, commonly appearing internodal by displacement from axil, (2–)3–5(–10)-flowered, flowers typically nodding, lacking bracts, arching short-strigose and with scattered, minute glandular hairs; peduncle ascending, 4.5–12 mm long; pedicel < peduncle length increasing 2× and recurved in fruit, gradually thickened and enlarged below flower. **Flower:** bisexual, radial, 6–8 mm across; receptacle slightly bulbous, ± 0.5 mm long; **calyx** 5-lobed, 1–2 mm long, sparsely short-strigose; tube cup-shaped or bell-shaped; lobes ovate, at anthesis appressed to corolla and 0.5–1 mm long increasing 2× and spreading to slightly reflexed in fruit, rounded to obtuse at tip, never membranous between lobes, veins obscure; **corolla** deeply 5-lobed, funnel-shaped; tube 0.5–1.5 mm long, greenish or yellowish, with color continuing into lobes to form a star; lobes ovate to lanceolate, 2–3 × 1–1.5 mm, white with yellowish or greenish arms of star tapering from tube to about lobe midpoint, lower surface short-ciliate and densely short-strigose with arching hairs, papillate, and sparsely glandular-hairy, with fewer hairs on upper surface; **stamens** 5, fused to corolla tube below midpoint, alternate with corolla lobes; filaments erect, broad-based and tapered, ± 0.5–1 mm long, pale green, stout, with spreading hairs for half length or base-to-tip; anthers erect and touching, basifixed, dithecal, oblong, 1.1–2 mm long, bright yellow, dehiscing by terminal pores then developing into inward-facing slits; pollen pale yellow; **pistil** 1, 2.5–3 mm long; ovary superior, sausage-shaped to spheric, ca. 1 mm long, green, glabrous, 2-chambered, each chamber with many ovules attached to center; style exerted above anthers, 2.5–3(–5) mm long, greenish, villous below midpoint with colorless hairs, upper portion somewhat glandular and initially hooked; stigma capitate. **Fruit:** berry, fleshy, ca. 50-seeded, spheric, 6–8(–9) mm, glossy deep purple to black; exocarp ± leathery and persistent; pulp watery, with 0–5(–8) stone cells; calyx spreading to slightly reflexed, ca. 4 mm across, with short tube and rounded lobes. **Seed:** discoid or compressed-ovoid, 1.1–1.5 mm across, whitish to tannish or stained purplish from dried pulp, pitted, glabrous. Mid-January–early November.

Naturalized. Herb occurring uncommonly in disturbed sites throughout the range. *Solanum americanum*, formerly listed as *S. nodiflorum*, is neither ill-smelling nor very glandular in comparison with other species, and its young shoots are arching short-strigose, becoming less so with age. This species has small flowers like *S. physalifolium*, but that species has dense, spreading hairs on the stem.

Depending on which treatment is used, specimens collected within the range sometimes key out as *S. nigrum* L, which is a weedy European annual widely distributed in North America. Characteristics of these two species overlap considerably, and the only positive way to tell them apart is to count chromosomes, because *S. americanum* is a diploid ($2n = 24$) whereas *S. nigrum* is a hexaploid ($6n = 72$). Both species have some glands on fresh young growth, so that is not a reliable character. *Solanum nigrum* tends to have a subracemose rather than umbellate cyme, slightly larger, dull fruits with slightly larger seeds, and more stone concretions under the exocarp than does *S. americanum*.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson