Myosotis scorpioides L. (forget-me-not, water scorpiongrass)

M. scorpioides var. palustris L.
M. palustris (L.) L.

Map 1304, Pl. 307d, e

Plants perennial herbs, with fibrous roots. Stems 15–60 cm long, spreading with ascending tips, often rooting at the lower nodes, solitary or more commonly few to several, usually few- to several-branched, sparsely to moderately pubescent with fine, stiff, mostly appressed-ascending, sometimes minutely pustular-based hairs. Leaf blades 2–8 cm long, 5–15 mm wide, narrowly oblong to narrowly oblong-elliptic or oblanceolate, rounded or angled to a bluntly pointed tip, the surfaces and margins moderately pubescent with short, stiff, appressed, pustular-based hairs. Inflorescences often appearing paired at the branch tips, the spikelike racemes sometimes aggregated into small panicles, the flowers with stalks 3–5 mm long, these elongating to 5–8 mm and spreading to slightly drooping at fruiting, all or nearly all lacking bracts. Calyces 2.5–4.0 mm long, actinomorphic, 5-lobed less than 1/2 of the way to the base, the lobes all more or less similar in appearance, broadly triangular, moderately to densely pubescent with short, appressed hairs, these straight at the tip. Corollas 4–10 mm long, broadly trumpet-shaped to nearly saucer-shaped, the tube 2.0–3.5 mm long, the spreading portion 5–9 mm in diameter (measured across the tips of the lobes), light blue to blue with a yellow spot in the throat, usually pink in bud. Stamens inserted near the tip of the corolla tube. Style 2.0–2.5 mm long, equal to or extending slightly beyond the tips of the nutlets. Nutlets 1–2 mm long, dark brown to black. 2n=22, 44, 64, 66. April–October.

Introduced, sporadic, mostly in the southern half of the state (native of Europe, introduced nearly throughout temperate North America). Banks of streams, rivers, and spring branches and margins of lakes; also ditches.

This species is one of three or more Old World species cultivated in gardens under the name forget-me-not. It rarely becomes established outside of cultivation in the Midwest. A morphologically similar relative, M. laxa Lehm. (smaller forget-me-not), is native and widespread in both the eastern and western United States but has not been collected yet in Missouri or most of the adjacent states. It differs from M. scorpioides in its stems mostly not rooting at the lower nodes, smaller corollas (the spreading portion 2–5 mm in diameter), and styles shorter than the nutlets.