

Polygonum cuspidatum an Introduced Weed in Porter County

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No mention is made of *Polygonum cuspidatum* in Deam's *Flora of Indiana* (2). Peattie describes no such species in his *Flora of the Indiana Dunes* (5). Many species of this group as described by Deam have been incorporated by subsequent authors into varieties or forms of more stable species. Generic name changes apparently have made some of Peattie's classification obsolete.

Such changes in nomenclature make identification and classification a bit confusing but in general this species and *P. saccharlense* (4) or *P. sachalinense* (3) are apparent introduced weeds from Asia. No traces of either by such specific names are found in the proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science (6). It is thought there is a stand of the latter species two miles northwest of Valparaiso, but since it did not flower, positive identification was not made and this paper shall refer primarily to *P. cuspidatum*.

This species is commonly known as Mexican Bamboo or Japanese Knotweed. Two well established stands are located along the railroad and adjacent properties south of Valparaiso University. Presumably the railroad may have had some effect in seed dispersal.

Identification is least difficult in the *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada* (4). Gleason and Cronquist separate section *Pleuropterus* to which *P. cuspidatum* and *P. sachalinense* belong from other groups in the following manner.

Section *Avicularia* has a small inflorescence, section *Pleuropterus* comparatively large. An obscure differentiation is the jointed leaves of Section *Avicularia*.

Pleuropterus is separated from Sections *Bistorta*, *Persicaria*, *Echinocaulon*, and *Tovaria* by possessing three outer sepals which are narrowly keeled. Finally *P. cuspidatum* and *P. sachalinense* are separated from *Tinaria* because neither are trailing nor twining. *P. cuspidatum* possesses leaves which are broadly truncate at the base and may be separated from *P. sachalinense* which has cordate leaves basally.

Other general features of *P. cuspidatum* are the stout sometimes branching stems, occasionally mottled, and reaching a length to three meters. The broadly ovate leaves (8-12cm x 12-15cm) are abruptly acuminate.

The inflorescence is a raceme originating from the upper axils and often branching freely to form panicles. The floret lacks petals but the five sepals are white to greenish white rendering a petal-like appearance. As previously stated the outer three are keeled and become winged in fruit providing a triangular achene.

The eight stamens have slender filaments and the three-parted stigmas are fringed. The pedicels are jointed at the summit. Gray's *Manual of Botany* (3) states it is dioecious although all specimens examined appeared to be monoecious.

P. cuspidatum was probably introduced from Asia as an ornamental. Bailey describes a closely related form as cultivated for its decorative value (1).

Literature Cited

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3. FERNALD, MERRITT L. 1950. Gray's Manual of Botany. 8th ed. American Book Co., New York.
4. GLEASON, HENRY A., and CRONQUIST, ARTHUR. 1963. Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada. D. Van Nostrand and Co., New York.
5. PEATTIE, DONALD C. 1930. Flora of the Indiana Dunes. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.
6. Proc. Indiana Academy of Science, 1895-1964.